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Authors:
Geoff Nichols
University of Sheffield
Matthew James
University of Wales Trinity Saint David & Cardiff Metropolitan University

EUROPEAN RESEARCH PROJECT 2015 – 2017

FINDINGS FOR POLICY MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

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European project authors include:

Julia Albrecht, University of Bern, Switzerland

Christoph Breuer, German Sport University Cologne, Germany

Elien Claes, KU Leuven, Belgium

Karsten Elmose-Østerlund, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Svenja Feiler, German Sport University Cologne, Germany

Nadja Giesen, German Sport University Cologne, Germany

Sylwia Gocłowska, Josef Pilsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw, Poland

Bjarne Ibsen, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Ramon Llopis-Goig, University of Valencia, Spain

Siegfried Nagel, University of Bern, Switzerland

Szilvia Perényi, University of Physical Education and University of Debrecen, Hungary

Monika Piątkowska, Josef Pilsudski University Physical Education in Warsaw, Poland

Jeroen Scheerder, KU Leuven, Belgium

Ørnulf Seippel, Norwegian School of Sports Sciences, Norway

Hanne Vandermeerschen, KU Leuven, Belgium

Jan-Willem van der Roest, Mulier Institute, the Netherlands

Harold van der Werff, Mulier Institute, the Netherlands

Jenny Adler Zwahlen, University of Bern, Switzerland

Project progress, publications, articles and information about conferences can be found at the project website: www.sdu.dk/SIVSCE.

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Table of Contents

1. Summary 1
2. Introduction and Project Description 3
2.1 Purpose 3
2.2 Work packages and project output 3
2.3 Partners 4
2.4 Main concepts 4
2.5 Theory used in the project 4
2.6 More information 4
3. An overview of sports club membership and sports volunteering across Europe 5
4. How government and sports organisations work together in other EU countries and what can be learnt from this? 7
4.1 The Netherlands 7
4.2 Switzerland 8
4.3 Denmark 9
4.4 Policy comparisons – "taking stock" 12
5. Comparing English clubs with those in Europe - the strengths and weaknesses of sports clubs 13
5.1 Size of club and gender of membership 13
5.2 Single and multisport club proportions 13
5.3 Facility ownership 14
5.4 Financial viability 16
5.5 Club strengths 17
5.6 Club weaknesses 19
6. What makes clubs successful? Examples of good practice in promoting volunteering and inclusion in clubs 21
6.1 Promoting volunteering – English good practice examples 22
6.2 Social inclusion in sports clubs – English good practice examples 24
6.3 European good practice examples; promoting volunteering and social inclusion 26
7. Conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the report 30
7.1 Conclusion 30
7.2 Recommendations 31
7.3 Limitations of the report and project 34
8. Acknowledgements 35
9. Appendices – The Four English Case Study Clubs 36
9.1 Market Harborough Squash Club, Leicestershire 36
9.2 Exmouth Swimming and Life Saving Society (ESLSS), Devon 41
9.3 Northern Hope Gym Club, Birtly, Co. Durham 45
9.4 Newent Parkrun, Gloucestershire 49
10. References 53

1. Summary

Drawing on findings from the research project 'Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe' (SIVSCE) conducted between 2015-2017, this report covers the following points:

- How government and sports organisations work together in other EU countries and what can be learnt from this?
- How English sports clubs compare to those in Europe, and what are their strengths and weaknesses?
- What makes clubs successful in promoting volunteering and social inclusion?

This is the first time that a comparative study with these aims has been conducted across ten European countries. The results reported here are selected from those of the whole project as the ones most relevant to an English and Welsh audience.

The project, funded by the European Union, involved ten countries:

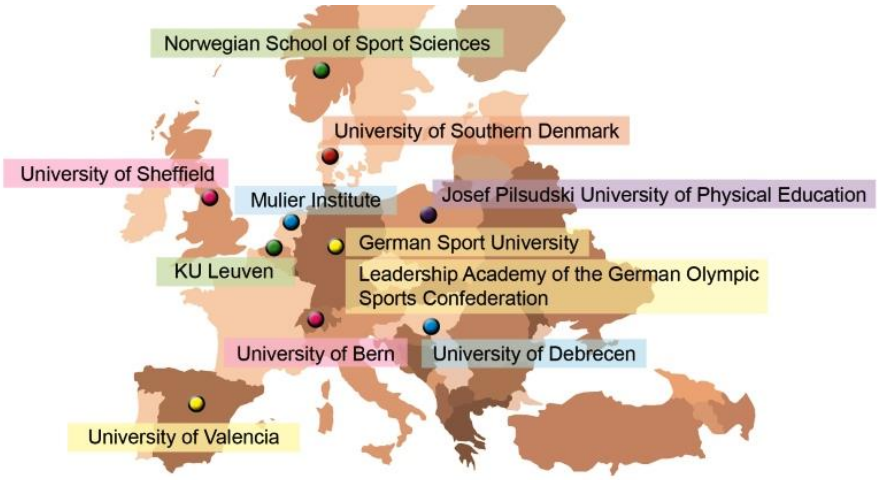

Fig.1: Map of partners in the SIVSCE Project

In other European countries, government support to sports clubs is generally higher than in England. Examples include: subsidised use of facilities, especially for young people; support for coach training; tax concessions for volunteers' work or expenses; and a wider range of government promoted programmes for target groups. This level of support reflects stronger welfare policies, which are a characteristic of societies with higher levels of equality. This is also associated with higher levels of sports participation and volunteering. Thus the extent to which the types of support to clubs in Europe could be adopted in the UK depends on the broader political context. Sport polices may promote volunteering and sports participation, but a greater positive effect, including an increase in general physical activity, would probably be achieved by a broader change in policy and society. However, a converse of lower levels of government support is the greater independence of the voluntary sector in sport from government in England, which could be perceived as a strength.

The structure and characteristics of English clubs is similar to those across Europe. English clubs are generally older than those in countries which have experienced state centralisation of sport provision, such as Hungary, Poland and Spain. As in other countries, women are under-represented as members. English clubs are less likely to have programmes for specific target groups, but it is worth noting that the survey did not include organisations specifically set up to do this. English clubs are less likely to report problems, such as recruitment of volunteers and members. The most significant challenge, which may threaten the existence of nine percent of English clubs, is the availability of facilities – this probably reflects a consequence of local government reactions to reduced budgets.

In promoting volunteering a critical factor appears to be the personal skills and enthusiasm of a key volunteer or volunteers who act as a volunteer co-ordinator. This role may be informal or formal, but reflects the club as a social organisation in which membership is voluntary. This person will have an overview of the tasks required and the skills to ask others if they would like to do them. Volunteers can be developed through more demanding roles, if they wish. Guidance and support, such as Sport England's 'Club Matters' online support and training sessions, were all valuable if a key volunteer wanted to use them. In general, the guidance promoted by Club Matters' and NGBs, such as defining the roles the club requires, were reflected in good practice across Europe. Volunteering can also be promoted by the physical layout of the club allowing for social interaction, setting expectations of membership, using all means of communication, and having a positive vison for the club. Volunteer recognition was helpful. Across Europe this extends to more financial and material rewards, such as uniforms, although these were seen to enhance satisfaction rather than recruitment.

Likewise, promoting inclusion, in the sense of promoting membership by groups of people who would not otherwise join, reflected the enthusiasm and vision of key volunteers, the ethos of the club, and synergy with club aims. If these were apparent, the club might then take advantage of support for specific programmes. Good practice across Europe matched existing practice in England; such as offering sporting opportunities at the right time, place and price and with enthusiastic coaches who had empathy with the target group. Related to this, a trend away from club based participation reflects a fragmentation of available leisure time and a difficulty, or unwillingness, to commit to regular group activity. Thus a trend is for team sports to be replaced by activities such as ParkRun; which combines freedom to participate on a Saturday of one's choice with a group experience, at low cost, at a local venue and with an inclusive ethos.

2. Introduction and Project Description

The 'Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe' (SIVSCE) project is a collaborative partnership co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The project has been implemented between 2015 and 2017. This chapter provides a brief overview of the project.

2.1 Purpose

The main aim of this project is to promote social inclusion and volunteering in sports clubs in Europe. This is achieved by comparing the role of government, and of sports clubs led by volunteers, across ten European countries. This is the first time these comparisons have been made. This has allowed the project to go beyond previous studies which have been specific to individual countries and has allowed conclusions to be made from these comparisons. It allows individual countries to draw implications for policy and practice.

2.2 Work packages and project output

The project is implemented in seven work packages (WPs):

WP1: An overview of sports structures and the role of government, written by experts in each country. This provided comparable information about: the relations between sports clubs and national, regional and local government; relations to national and regional non-governmental sports organizations; and the historical developments of clubs.

WP2: An online survey of 35,790 sports clubs. The numbers varied between countries but included a minimum of 600 (Norway) and a maximum of 2,500 (Germany). This is the first time the same survey has been able to compare questions across countries.

WP3: An online member and volunteer survey conducted in at least 30 sports clubs in each country. This included 13,082 club members and volunteers, ranging from about 450 in Spain to about 3,200 in Denmark.

WP4: Overall analysis of the results from the three studies conducted in WP1, WP2 and WP3.

WP5: A collection of examples of best practice in relation to social inclusion and volunteering. This included three case study clubs in each country. These were usually selected from responses to the club survey, conformed by telephone contact. This was followed up by a face-to-face interview and use of other club documents. In England, four case studies were conducted.

WP6: Creation of a handbook with suggestions for sports policies and club management, to promote social inclusion and volunteering in sports clubs.

WP7: A broad dissemination of findings and suggestions (e.g. European and national conferences).

The project generates the following output:

- Five reports (one for each WP 1 to 5)
- A handbook (WP6)
- A European conference and ten national conferences (WP7)

This report has selected results from the work package reports and interpreted the findings most relevant to England, using previous research. Results have been selected as those of most interest to an English audience and readers wanting more detail should look at the full work package reports available at: www.sdu.dk/SIVSCE.

2.3 Partners

The project includes eleven partners from ten countries dispersed across Europe, as illustrated in the map above (Fig. 1). The broad representation of countries from different parts of Europe ensures that project findings will be of broad relevance to nations across Europe.

The projects partners were selected for their expertise in sports clubs, sports policy and sports participation.

2.4 Main concepts

Sports clubs

The report examines sports clubs in which membership is voluntary, the clubs exist to meet the needs of members, volunteers provide work to allow the club to function, the clubs are relatively autonomous from government, and they do not seek to make a profit.

One definition of a club is difficult to apply across all of Europe as clubs vary due to the circumstances of individual countries.

Social integration and social inclusion

The project used the concept 'social integration' as a broader term than social inclusion. It distinguished between:

1. *Structural integration:* The extent to which groups in society (for example, women or immigrants) are proportionally represented in club membership.
2. *Socio-cultural integration:* The extent to which club are able to accept the norms and values of the club (assimilation); and the extent to which the club respects the different norms and values of members (pluralism).
3. *Socio-affective integration:* The extent to which club members take part in the social activities of the club and identify with the club.

In this report we have just referred to social inclusion and selected results from the main project. For more detail readers are referred to the full project reports.

Volunteering

The main characteristics of volunteering, as used in this study, are that it is freely engaged in, it is unpaid or paid for with a symbolic amount, it is carried out for people other than one's self or family, and takes place in a role in an organisation. The way people think about volunteering varies between countries, making a definitive definition difficult.

2.5 Theory used in the project

The project did not build on particular theoretical ideas, apart from that sports clubs were important to study; they will vary across Europe because they function in different environments; and they represent the shared interests of members. The project studied three 'levels': the environment the clubs operate in, the characteristics of clubs, and members and volunteers. These inter-relate.

2.6 More information

Project reports, articles and information about conferences can be found at the project website: http://www.sdu.dk/SIVSCE. These cover more general information about the project, as well as reports on the specific work packages.

3. An overview of sports club membership and sports volunteering across Europe

Table 1: Sports club participation and participation in voluntary work that supports sporting activity (people 15 years and over).

	Sports club participation (%)	Participation in voluntary work that supports sport (%)
Netherlands	27	18
Switzerland	25	22
Denmark	25	18
Germany	24	10
Belgium	16	9
EU average	*12*	*7*
United Kingdom	11	10
Spain	7	4
Norway	7	25
Hungary	7	6
Poland	3	3

Source (1): Breuer, C., Hoekman, R., Nagel, S., & Werff, H. v. d. (Eds.) (2015). Sports clubs in Europe. A cross-national comparative perspective (p. 423). Basel, Switzerland: Springer. (nine European countries not included in the present study have been excluded from this table).

This shows considerable variations in levels of sports participation in clubs and in sports volunteering across Europe. In general, the two measures match, apart from in Norway which has low sport participation in clubs, but high sports volunteering. This is because participation may take place out of clubs, for example in the traditional sport of skiing, and sports volunteering may be at events or schools, and adults supporting juniors in clubs.

Clubs are important for sports participation. In England the most recent estimate in 2015 is that there are 62,398 clubs affiliated to the National Governing Bodies who are supported by Sport England (2, 3). This excludes clubs in other sports and those unaffiliated to NGBs. However, in England there has been a trend (measured by the Active People Survey) away from participation in clubs and in team sports towards participation individually or in an informal group (4). Growth activities are athletics (running) cycling, gym and fitness clubs. Other countries in the study (the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark) have also noted these trends. This reflects a fragmentation and reduction of available time (it's harder for anyone to commit to regular activity with a team) as well as a general trend away from group activities.

For example, parkrun UK has grown because participants can take part on any Saturday morning and get the group experience, but only on the Saturdays when they are able to. It welcomes all participants and is free to join and take part in, so the only cost is equipment and travel. Golf has declined in England – probably because it takes a long time to play. Swimming is normally an individual activity, but has also declined – probably due to cost, reduced pools and reduced available pool time.

Clubs are important because they provide a set of social relationships and shared enthusiasms to provide a collective resource. This is termed 'social capital' (3, 5, 6). Volunteering not only provides a collective opportunity to play sport, normally at a cheaper cost than elsewhere, but also a set of satisfactions for the volunteers themselves. This has been stressed by Sport England (7) Sport Wales (8) and Join In, in an attempt to promote volunteering by selling its value to potential volunteers. In the UK sports organisations are one of the most important type of organisation in which volunteering takes place.

Fig.2: Ambassadors of the Dutch Championships 2016 (SIVSCE Work Package 5).© Frans Vledder, Sprint.

4. How government and sports organisations work together in other EU countries and what can be learnt from this?

This section is especially relevant for those lobbying for policy at national level. Examples of government polices from the Work Package 1 report focus on countries with high levels of sports participation in clubs, as well as high levels of volunteering in sport so have included the Netherlands, Denmark and Switzerland.

4.1 The Netherlands

National government policies

Government uses sport to achieve social objectives such as increasing social participation in general, social integration, healthy lifestyles and creating safe neighbourhoods. They utilise a range of programmes which often focus on specific groups. Examples include: youth ('Youth in Motion', 'Sport is Cool', 'Participating all youth through sports', 'Neighbourhood, Education and Sport Impulse' and 'Sport Impulse'); women ('Sports, even I do it'); handicapped people ('Special Heroes'); migrant groups ('Sport is Cool', 'Participating all migrant youth through sports'); and the elderly. Clubs can only apply to be part of some programmes if their national federation (governing body) is participating – others are open to all clubs.

An example of a national programme instigated by two government departments is 'Impulse community schools, sports and culture'. In this programme, 'neighbourhood sports coaches' are employed to stimulate cooperation between schools, sports clubs and other social organisations. In January 2015, there were 2,607 full-time jobs for these neighbourhood sports coaches. This is similar to the former school sports partnerships in England and to Sport Wales' Active Young People programmes that are delivered in local schools and communities across Wales.

Legislation supporting voluntary work

Legislation allows volunteers of sports clubs to receive a remuneration for time committed and expenses of €4.50 per hour (€2.50 per hour for people younger than 23-years-old), with a maximum of €1,500 per year, without paying tax. Almost half of the Dutch sports clubs have volunteers that benefit from this tax measure. Sports clubs benefit from a VAT threshold for fundraising activities (max. €50,000, including canteen income), for courses for members and an adapted VAT rate for the provision of sports facilities. National Lottery funds are used to partly support national sports federations.

Facility budgets

The 393 municipalities (local government) have a total annual budget for sports of €1.4billion, most of which is for building and maintaining sports facilities. Local governments provide facilities with reduced fees to sports clubs, but are not legally obliged to do so. This subsidy is being reduced – in 2013, 93% of the Dutch local municipalities had cut their sport budget, or were planning to do so in the near future. These subsidies may be conditional on the clubs participating in policy programmes. However, similarly to the UK, clubs are a vital delivery agent of national and local sports policy.

4.2 Switzerland

National legislation

Federal law enables the government to give funding to sports clubs – or example, for the development of coaches and the organisation of youth sport groups or because of the accepted positive social effects of sport (such as social integration of specific target groups, the accumulation of cultural and social capital, health promotion etc.). Two further laws oblige the federation, cantons and communities to set conditions that facilitate access to sport for disabled people and immigrants. However, there are no national programmes that support the participation of immigrants in sport.

Fig.3: Inclusive football opportunity at FC Thun, Switzerland, for young migrants and people with disabilities (SIVSCE Work Package 5). © FC Thun (Hans-Jürgen Bartl).

National level programmes for young people and coaching development in clubs

At the national level, sports clubs are directly supported through the national *Youth and Sport* programme (called J+S), to which the Federal Office of Sport distributes over 80 million Swiss Francs (CHF) per year (~£364m) to clubs engaged in the promotion of youth sports. Clubs receive a fee per young person (aged between five and 20 years) participating in their sports clubs. This programme is mainly implemented through volunteers in sports clubs.

In 2010, approximately 700,000 children and young adults took part in one or more courses in 75 different sports offered by J+S. This corresponds to about two-thirds of the Swiss population aged between ten and 20 years. Funding also pays for the development of coaches and for instructors responsible for their development. Sports clubs are therefore directly subsidised for their courses supporting youth sport and indirectly through the development of their coaches. The only condition of this funding is that coaches are qualified ("have a valid licence") – there are currently over 120,000 licensed J+S coaches and

managers in Switzerland. Specialised courses include how to recruit and motivate volunteers in a sports club and the integration of immigrants and disabled people.

It is interesting to consider if this direct link between participation by young people in clubs and club funding could be piloted in the UK. National Governing Body (NGB) funding is linked to participation measured through the Active Lifestyles Survey, but the link between youth participation in a club and funding would be much more direct.

National level support for adults in clubs, through coach development

Clubs may also take part in delivering the *Adults Sport Programme Switzerland* (ESA) for people over 20 years old. No financial grants for sports clubs are available for participation in this programme but the club receives free training of its coaches who deliver this programme. Most of the coaches in ESA and J+S are volunteers so their coaching courses are provided free of charge. The focus on funding for young people reflects the evidence that this can set the foundation in terms of sporting social capital for lifelong participation (9).

National government facility support

At a national level, construction of sports facilities has been supported by CHF 14-70million (~£11m-£56m) between 1998 and 2012.

Local government facility subsidy

Consistent with the principal of subsidiarity in the Swiss government system, local government has a lot of autonomy over sports policy so there are considerable differences in support to clubs. It supports clubs by providing sports facilities at concessional rates – in 2010, about three-quarters of all sports clubs (73%) relied exclusively or partially on public sports facilities.

Local government support for young people and immigrants

Local municipalities may pay a lump sum to communal sports clubs. Depending on the financial resources of the community and the number of members, particularly children and adolescents, clubs receive about 5-20 CHF per member (~£4-£16) annually or a flat rate sum of 100 or 1,000 CHF. Sports clubs also receive financial support for special programmes that promote sport-related integration of immigrants.

4.3 Denmark

National government legislation and policy

At the national level, the political aims and objectives for sports in Denmark are general and vague. The 'Leisure Act' states that the aim of the law is, *'...to promote an understanding of democracy and active citizenship (...)* [and to] *strengthen the members' ability and desire to take responsibility for their own lives and to participate in society actively and in a committed manner'*. Thus, it enshrines a general aim of promoting free association around interests, such as in a sports club.

A general goal of 'sports for all' has not been associated with specific measurable targets for participation by disadvantaged groups such as the disabled, the elderly and refugees. Sports organisations and clubs are expected to work for the inclusion of these target groups in

sports, but with no precise political goals. Similarly, there are no specific aims stated for volunteering within the field of sports.

The lack of precise targets associated with government objectives reflects the relationship between government and voluntary associations, which is based on a respect for autonomy, but also on trust that associations will act in the spirit of including all members of society. In Denmark, the three national sports organisations (umbrella associations) are directly supported by national government through National Lottery proceeds. Every four years, funding from the Ministry of Culture to the three individual sports organisations is negotiated – the organisations then formulate performance goals, which contribute to the realization of political objectives. It is up to each of the sports organisations to decide which initiatives have to be launched to reach the goals in the agreement. The agreement is more a clarification of a social consensus on the role of sport in Danish society, rather than setting measurable targets.

It is interesting to contrast this with the funding arrangements between Sport England and NGBs, which are based on measured performance rather than trust, to aim at a consensus of objectives.

Local sports clubs can apply for money from a national government fund to promote specific purposes, but this is insignificant overall.

Local government support to sports clubs for members under the age of 25

At the level of the sports clubs the 'Leisure Act' – obliges municipalities to give voluntary sports clubs and leisure associations access to indoor and outdoor facilities; owned by municipalities free of charge or against payment of a minor fee, or to receive reimbursement of two thirds of the cost of renting privately owned facilities when the club members are aged 25 or under. The same act provides economic funding from local government to clubs and associations – typically an amount for each member aged 25 or under). The free use of these facilities and the reimbursement of two-thirds of the cost of renting the privately owned ones for club members aged 25 or under, accounted for 83% of the total public funding for sports in 2012.

This level of subsidy is extremely generous compared to England or Wales. In Wales, subsidising facility hire is a short term option (typically 20 weeks) to help clubs and activities become established. After this, there is an expectation that clubs need to recover these costs themselves through participation and membership fees. The club survey results in England show the most significant problem is access to facilities, which may reflect the way local government has reacted to budget cuts. So local government does not presently have the capacity to provide the level of subsidy as in Denmark. If it was provided from outside local government, it might spiral upwards as local authorities used it to compensate for reduced budgets.

Municipalities (local government) pay a fee to clubs ranging from €3-15 per member for each member aged 25 or under. If implemented in England and Wales, the fee for participants in this age category might help reduce the drop off in participation between 16 and 25, especially as people leave full-time education. The municipalities can also choose to financially support sports activities for adults, and in most municipalities, all members of

sports clubs can use the municipally owned facilities free of charge. The free use of facilities and the funding based on membership numbers amount to about half of the income of clubs. There are plenty of public facilities: in 2013, across the 98 municipalities, there were 1,494 multifunctional sports halls of more than 800 m2, 5,128 soccer pitches, 1,934 tennis courts and 259 swimming pools, along with many other types of facilities.

To be eligible for subsidised use of facilities, clubs must: be democratically organised; have a purpose in accordance with the 'Leisure Act' (it is not clarified what is meant by this); and must provide annual accounts. As at the national level, almost none of the municipalities have indicated how they will promote the objectives they state sport achieves. In some municipalities goals relate almost entirely to the integration of disabled people.

Fig.4: Gymnastics activities performed at the Daytime Sports Club in Helle (SIVSCE Work Package 5). © Idræt om dagen, Helle.

Most municipalities have a committee for distributing municipal subsidies to voluntary sports clubs, leisure associations and associations for non-formal education in so-called 'evening schools'. The committee has members from the municipal board and representatives from sports and leisure associations. This committee decides, in principle, how to support sports clubs and other leisure associations within the realm of the 'Leisure Act'.

Tax concessions for volunteers

Legislation permits people who do voluntary work to receive around €650 per year to cover expenses without being taxed. This represents a subsidy of all organisations supported by volunteers.

4.4 Policy comparisons – "taking stock"

Sections 3.1-3.3 focus on policies in the three countries which have the highest proportion of their population taking part in sport, and high proportions taking part in sport volunteering. While it is not a systematic evaluation of any of these polices, the overall conclusion that the policies and high levels of participation are linked is reasonable.

Characteristics of these polices include:

- A commitment to the social value of sport, which in some cases is statutory.
- Most public subsidy is allocated and planned at local government level.
- Subsidised facility use by clubs.
- A subsidy directly to support junior members (in some countries, up to the age of 25) and coaching development. The subsidy or fee linked directly to junior members is a tight link between funding and performance.
- A high level of club involvement in these programmes.
- Financial benefits for volunteering (tax concessions, or a direct payment).

These countries are different to England because there are higher levels of public expenditure, especially at local government level. Constraints on local government funding in England and Wales and disproportionately in areas of social disadvantage; mean that the levels of subsidy in the EU countries with high sports participation are unimaginable for English local government. Policies subsidising facility use by clubs contrast directly with the club survey showing that access to facilities being the biggest threat to 9% of clubs' existence in England.

Welfare policies incorporating support for sport are only part of the picture. Countries with more equal income distributions generally have higher levels of volunteering, generalised trust, sports participation and leisure time; as well as stronger welfare policies and worker rights (10, 11, 3). These inter-relate, so the relevant question is not how sport policy can improve society but how general changes in social policy would result in more people adopting healthy lifestyles (12). To answer this, we need to understand why a society such as Denmark, for example, is different or generally 'better' than England. Of course, policy makers; such as Sport England, Sport Wales and local government; have to do their best within their own policy parameters.

In the three countries used as examples, there is a general assumption that 'sport works' to alleviate social problems. This also drove sport policy in the UK in the 1970s, for example, through the expansion of subsidised facilities and specific programmes, and has been criticised as based on value judgements rather than evidence (13). In England each initiative is expected to produce evaluation results. Funding, such as to NGBs, is increasingly outcome contingent. In comparing countries, it was striking the extent that funding of specific programmes being conditional on performance, and the attempt to measure performance, was distinctive to England. Does this reflect better management in England, or is performance measured less in other countries because there is a stronger shared belief in the value of sport, and trust in those delivering it? The simple link between number of junior members in a club and a fee or subsidy is an effective way of linking subsidy to outcomes.

5. Comparing English clubs with those in Europe - the strengths and weaknesses of sports clubs

The same questionnaire was completed by a sample of clubs in each country so results can be compared. It's worth noting that limitations of this comparison include the potentially different interpretation of questions in different languages and the extent to which the samples represent all clubs. In England 45.2% of the sample had 'clubmark' status and 16.4% were aiming at it; compared to approximately 19% of all clubs in England. So it is likely that the English clubs represent those which are more formally organised, larger, and probably more successful.

5.1 Size of club and gender of membership

Table 2: Median club size and gender comparison (SIVSCE Work Package 2).

Country	Median	Male (%)	Female (%)
Belgium (Flanders)	76.0	66.6	33.4
Denmark	112.0	60.6	39.4
England	112.0	65.9	34.1
Germany	163.0	62.5	37.5
Hungary	50.0	68.5	31.5
Netherlands	270.0	62.0	38.0
Norway	199.0	60.2	39.8
Poland	60.0	72.4	27.6
Spain	45.0	70.0	30.0
Switzerland	58.0	63.6	36.4

The best comparison of size is the median, as the distributions in some countries are affected by a few very big clubs (England, for example). In England it confirms the picture of clubs being relatively small organisations, but club size (based on the median) is even smaller in five other countries. The gender split in England is more equal than Poland, Spain, Hungary and Belgium, where presumably a patriarchal hegemony in sport is (even) more dominant.

5.2 Single and multisport club proportions

85% of English clubs were single sport. Multi-sport clubs are most common in Germany, Norway and Hungary. This probably reflects historical developments of sport in these countries. Single sport clubs may be less able to adapt to changes in demand for sport.

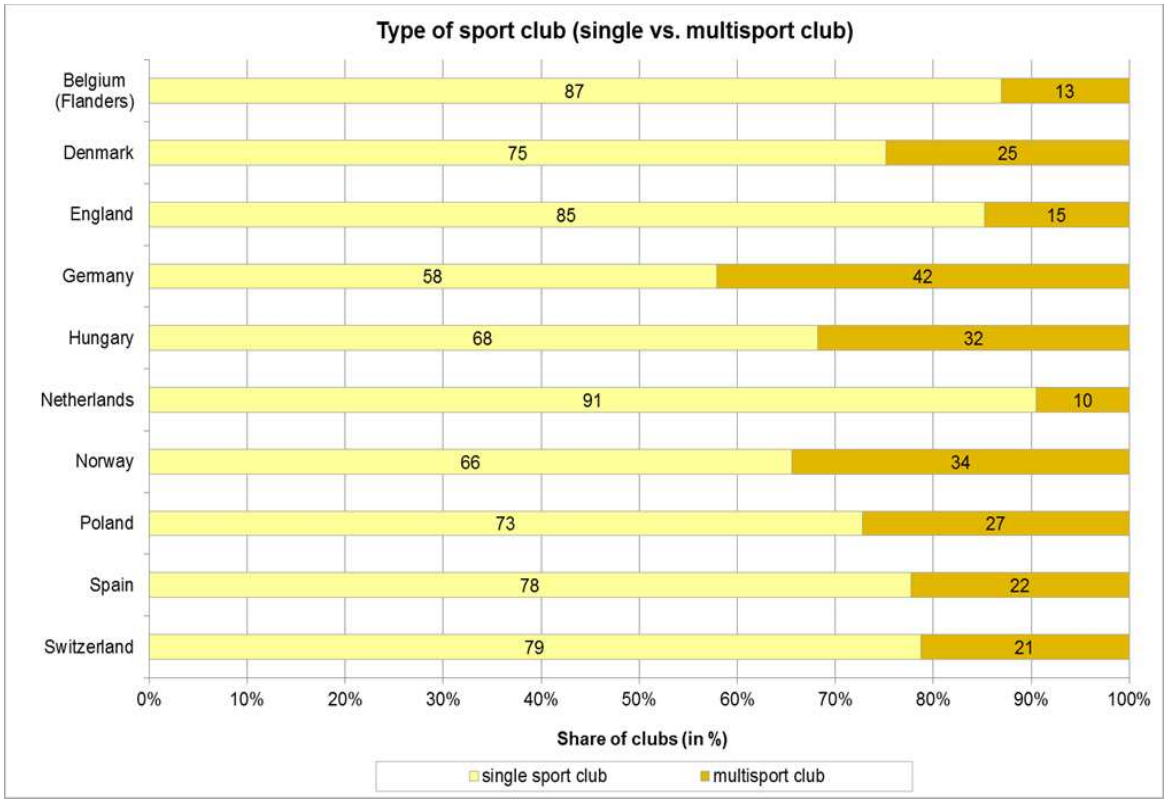

Fig.5: Single sport vs. multisport clubs (SIVSCE Work Package 2).

5.3 Facility ownership

41% of English clubs own their own facilities. The balance between ownership of facilities and hiring public ones reflects the circumstances in each country. For example, in Poland and Hungary a large amount of public facilities were constructed under the Soviet regime and are free to use. In Denmark, use of public facilities is highly subsidised.

Facility ownership provides a social focal point for a club and a source of income through social facilities and possibly hiring them to other users. Facility ownership is associated with larger clubs and more formal management practices – it will protect the club against loss of access to public facilities, discussed below. On the other hand, it will require more voluntary work in management and maintenance. Further study could explore whether clubs owning their own facilities in England tended to be the longer established ones, as it is difficult to see how a new club could afford to buy a facility.

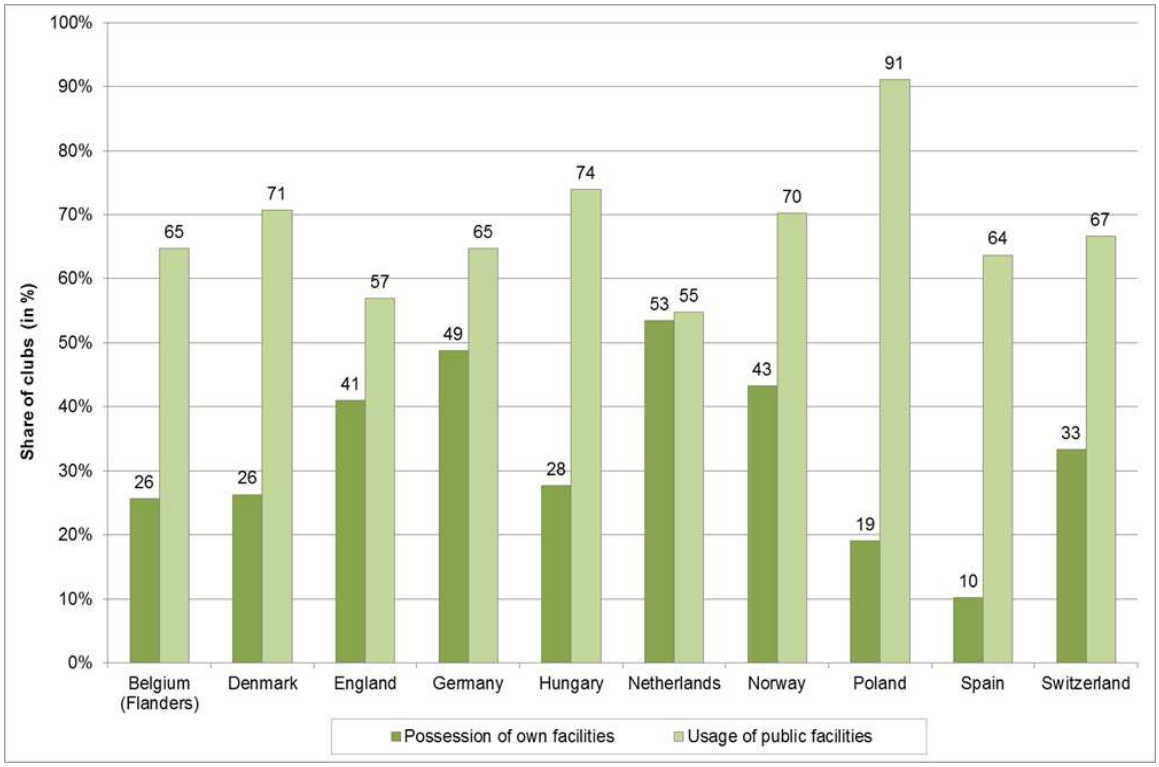

Fig.6: Use of club-owned and public-owned facilities (SIVSCE Work Package 2).

The comparisons of sport subsidies across countries showed that in some countries use of public facilities was highly subsidised. Of clubs that use public facilities 90% in England had to pay to hire them; the second highest percentage across the ten countries. Lower percentages in some countries may also reflect sports which use open facilities, such as skiing in Norway. The low percentage of clubs paying fees to use of public facilities in Denmark and Switzerland reflects the public subsides, discussed above.

Table 3: Usage fee for public facilities (SIVSCE Work Package 2).

Country	Liable to pay a usage fee (share of clubs that use public facilities, %)
Netherlands	96
England	90
Belgium (Flanders)	89
Hungary	63
Poland	56
Switzerland	54
Norway	53
Germany	51
Spain	48
Denmark	41

Fig.7: Silver medal at the women's Borbély Endre Memorial Football Tournament, 2014 (SIVSCE Work Package 5). © Deaf Sports club, Budapest, Cz. Szép Kata.

5.4 Financial viability

Across Europe, clubs are small financial organisations. In nine countries the median revenue per member ranged from €274 in Norway to €94 in Spain, with a median of €0.1 in Hungary. In England the median was €168 (~£155). In some countries there is a considerable variation between clubs, making the median the best comparative measure.

Clubs don't aim to make a profit; rather to be financially viable. As small organisations with volunteer labour, financial income and expenditure is quite flexible. In 2014, 74.7% of English clubs had a positive financial balance – slightly below the European average.

Table 4: Balanced profit and loss account in 2014 (SIVSCE Work Package 2).

Country	Share of clubs reporting a positive balance (%)	Share of clubs reporting a negative balance (%)
Belgium (Flanders)	85.2	14.8
Hungary	79.7	20.3
Netherlands	77.6	22.4
Germany	77.0	23
Norway	77.0	23
Denmark	76.2	23.8
England	74.7	25.3
Spain	73.4	26.6
Poland	72.3	27.7
Switzerland	66.4	33.6

Direct public subsidy as a percentage of revenue varied considerably; from 41% in Poland to 5% in the Netherlands and 6% in England.

Table 5: Public subsidies as a percentage of revenue (SIVSCE Work Package 2).

Country	Direct public subsidies (share of revenue in %)
Poland	41
Hungary	28
Norway	17
Denmark	15
Switzerland	14
Belgium (Flanders)	13
Spain	11
Germany	9
England	6
Netherlands	5

5.5 Club strengths

Despite English clubs reporting problems in volunteer and membership recruitment, see Fig. 8., 56% experienced stable numbers of volunteers in the last five years; 25% an increase and 19% a decrease. In terms of members, 44% experienced an increase and 20% a decrease. Both these figures are similar to clubs across Europe.

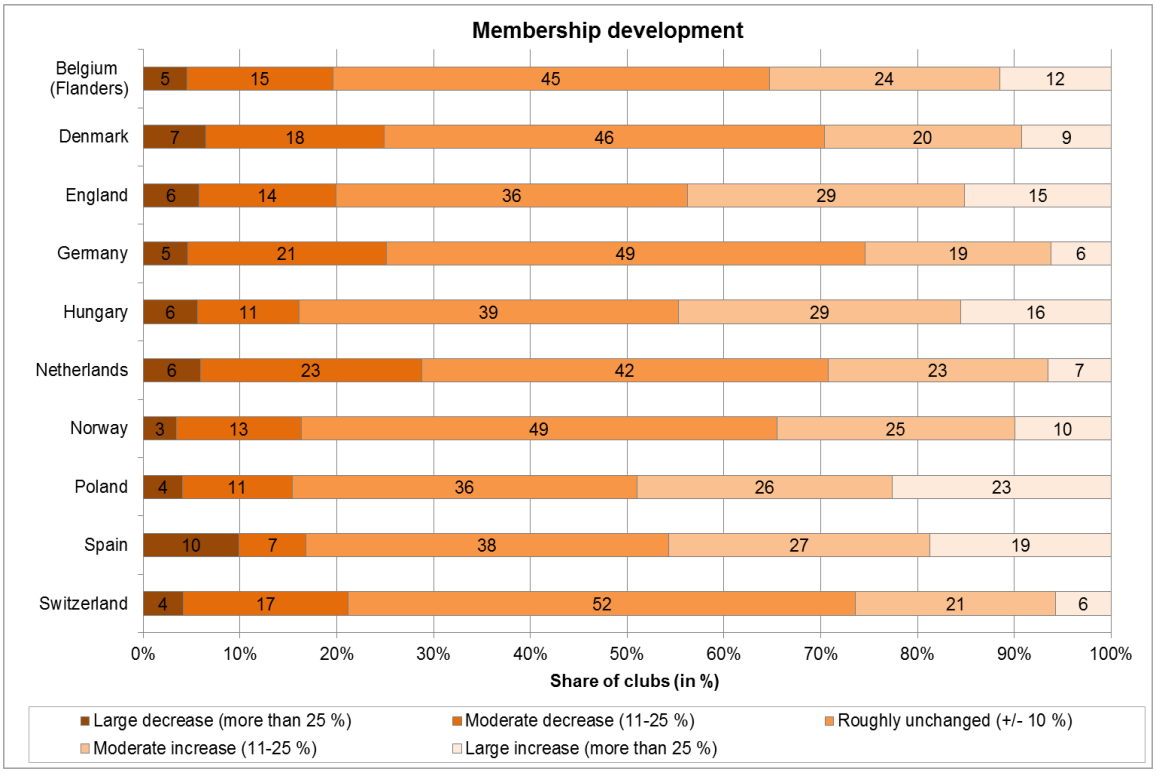

Fig.8: Membership development within the last five years (SIVSCE Work Package 2)

A strength of clubs is their resilience and contribution to a stable network of community opportunities (social capital). Margaret Talbot, (a former CEO of the Central Council for Physical Recreation, now SARA) regarded the network of sports clubs as a valuable collective resource, to be nurtured like a flower (personal communication). In England 20% of clubs were founded before 1930 and 10% before 1900. This shows their durability as social organisations, although 28% were founded after 2000. Just comparing clubs founded before and after 2000, the length of club continuity is not unusual in England. Hungary, Poland and Spain have a much higher percentage of younger clubs – which reflects their development after the centralised states of the Soviet era, and under Franco. In Poland and Spain no clubs were founded before 1900.

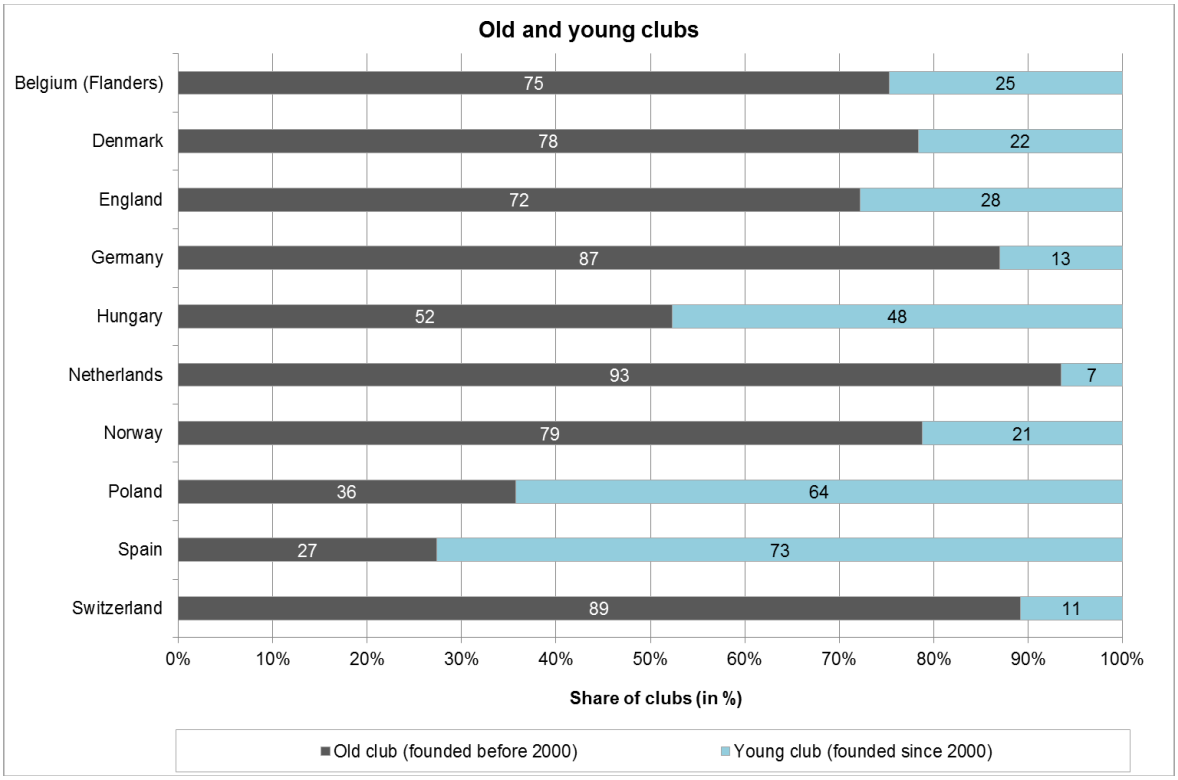

Fig.9: Old vs. young sports clubs (SIVSCE Work Package 2).

However, despite their apparent stability as a social institution, it is very difficult to see how the network of at least 62,398 volunteer-led sports clubs in England (counting only those affiliated to Sport England supported NGBs (2)) could be established today. Trends away from regular volunteering, away from club based sport and the increased relative costs of land, would make this impossible. In this way the network of clubs is a precious inheritance, although there is a shift away from club participation.

5.6 Club weaknesses

Clubs responded to questions about problems on a five-point scale – from 1, no problem; to 5, a very big problem – thus any score over 1 indicates some level of problem. If a club scored a problem as 5, very big, it was asked if this problem would threaten the existence of the club in the next 5 years.

Table 6: Club problems – England (SIVSCE Work Package 2).

Problem	Mean score
Recruitment/retention of members	2.3
Recruitment/retention of volunteers on the board level	2.4
Recruitment/retention of coaches/instructors	2.3
Recruitment/retention of referees/officials	2.4
Financial situation of the club	2.2
Availability of sport facilities	2.5
Number of laws, orders, directives	2.5
Demographic change in the region	2.1
Local competition from commercial sport providers	1.7

Assuming an equal propensity to optimism/pessimism, English clubs are in no worse or better a position than clubs across Europe in general. The most significant problems are availability of facilities and 'laws, orders, directives' (red tape).

Clubs were asked if a problem threatened their existence. This applied to 18% of clubs in England, which ranked 9th out of the ten countries.

Table7: Proportion of clubs with at least one problem threatening their existence (SIVSCE WP 2).

Country	Club has at least one existential problem (share of clubs in %)
Poland	38
Germany	36
Switzerland	35
Hungary	34
Spain	33
Denmark	21
Norway	19
England	18
Netherlands	13
Belgium (Flanders)	9

However, in England the most significant problem threatening a club's existence is the availability of sport facilities: 9% of all clubs feel threatened by this. Moreover, 6% of all English clubs reported their financial situation threatened their existence.

Reduced facility access could be because: local government facilities have closed; they have become more expensive to hire; or they have become more market-oriented, so clubs have been priced out at the times they need them. This reflects a long term impact of reduced local authority budgets. If, in response, local authorities transfer the management of facilities to the oligopoly of leisure trusts, these trusts will operate in a more market-oriented way unless conditions are stipulated in their transfer arrangements. A review of 232 local authorities' websites in April 2015 showed that nine national operators – the majority operating as a form of non-profit distributing organisation – managed facilities in 44% of authorities. Of 161 contracts with local authorities, three operators held 61%. Of the unitary authorities in Wales who have transferred management of their facilities; four have gone to in-house leisure trusts; five to external leisure trusts, and one to a private sector operator. Thus a small number of facility operators may have a lot of influence over the availability of facilities to clubs.

This appears to be the biggest threat to sports clubs in England and is likely to have increased since the club survey was conducted in 2015. The effect of changes in the availability of sports facilities to clubs needs to be researched. This could be done in the next club survey, in an analysis of facility pricing (such research after the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering showed an increased market orientation) and case studies of transfer of facility management to leisure trusts.

Fig.10: Curling team at the National Cup in 2014 (from SIVSCE Work Package 5).
© Deaf Sports club, Budapest, Cz. Szép Kata.

6. What makes clubs successful? Examples of good practice in promoting volunteering and inclusion in clubs

This section initially uses results from the four clubs interviewed in England: Northern Hope Gym Club; Market Harborough Squash Club; Exmouth Swimming and Lifesaving Society (ESLS) and Newent Parkrun. The Parkrun example was not used in the project report (only three examples were required from each country for the European study) but was included as an English case study because parkrun has been so successful in increasing participation and including a wide range of participants. This reflects the trend towards more informal sports participation and the ability to accommodate 'episodic volunteering' – for individual events. The commentary on these case studies was able to use the experience of the English project members visiting the clubs and conducting the interviews. This report then uses results from the Work Package 5 report, which covers the 30 case study clubs across the ten countries.

English examples show what is working in the English context; including support by national and local government and funding opportunities. European examples show what is working in other countries, although this has to factor in greater government support, the different relationship between sports organisations and government, and the specific issues facing those countries. For example, other countries often have policies to help refugees, and also have more refugees to help.

Fig.11: ESLS Masters and Senior Age Group swimmers competing at National Champs in Sheffield (SIVSCE Work Package 5). © Exmouth Swimming and Life Saving Society 2016.

6.1 Promoting volunteering – English good practice examples

Skills and role of a 'volunteer coordinator'

The personal qualities and skills of the interviewees, who were key members of the clubs, were very important. Volunteers are not bound to the club by the need to earn a wage – they are bound by the shared enthusiasm for the sport/activity and the positive social relationships. Therefore, a volunteer who recruits and 'manages' others has to have a high level of social skills and enthusiasm. Conversely, someone without these qualities will probably have a negative effect.

Members want conviviality, as well as the chance to play sport (3), so a successful club will have a good social atmosphere. A volunteer coordinator, and all club members, need to make new members and potential volunteers feel welcome. This seems obvious, but academic theory on people management in volunteer organisations tends to have been adapted from paid work situations and underplay the importance of social relationships (14).

The volunteer coordinator, although this role may not be formally defined, has an overview of the tasks required in the club. These tasks may be formally written down, or not. However, this allows new members to be matched to the tasks required. New volunteers are encouraged to take the more minor roles, but with a progression in mind; as they gain skills, confidence, commitment and experience the personal rewards of volunteering. The identification and allocation of tasks may reduce the burden on any one volunteer. It will be interesting to relate these findings to the research into the role of volunteer coordinators, commissioned by Sport Wales in 2016.

A volunteer coordinator needs the skills to ask others to volunteer. A management style needs to balance the needs of the club with what volunteers feel they can offer, rather than just asking volunteers to do the jobs defined by the club.

Offering small, time-limited volunteering roles meets the need of volunteers who feel this is all they can give. A trend towards this type of 'episodic' volunteering reflects the same factors as the trend towards individual and informal sports participation.

Thus the value of a role of volunteer coordinator needs to be sold to clubs as making work far more effective overall, rather than as another task a volunteer needs to fill. Good clubs will be doing it anyway, although informally.

Physical layout of the club

The physical layout of the club can be designed to encourage social interaction and volunteering. For example, Northern Hope planned a space for parents to watch their children participating and have refreshments at the same time. Market Harborough recognised the importance of a social space where members could meet in the bar, and for parents while their children were participating. Clubs who do not own their own facilities may have to think about how the space for meeting socially can be provided.

Setting expectations of volunteering, stepping down and acknowledgement

An expectation of volunteering can be set at the initial contact with the club; for example, on a membership form. It is clear from the outset that the club requires volunteers to function. Volunteers are acknowledged; for example, publically thanked at Parkrun, or by life membership at ESLS.

Clubs talked about a succession policy, although this was informal. It was accepted that volunteers could step down from a role, partly or completely, and this was normal.

Using all communication channels

Clubs can use a range of communication channels, including Facebook, Twitter, emails, notice boards and personal contact. Different members will respond to different communications. A list of tasks on a website can allow members to volunteer in an episodic manner; as at Parkrun. This use of the internet allows people to volunteer at short notice, but it also requires one of the core volunteers running the club to be prepared to respond at short notice too. If the volunteer roles being signed up for on a website are critical – there has to be a back-up plan if they are not filled.

Fig.12: The start line at Newent parkrun. Volunteers are publicly thanked at this point every week (SIVSCE Work Package 5). © University of Sheffield, 2016.

Having a vision, and a positive approach to finding and using support

The key volunteers in the English case studies had a vision for the club which incorporated an ethos – this directed club development and is similar to a formal organisation having a mission statement which directs its activities. In a club this is a collective ethos, although not formally defined. For example, Northern Hope was directed by a vision of positively developing young people through gymnastics (hence 'hope' in the name). Market Harborough had a vision to develop young people to be 'nice people' as well as squash players. The club ethos may be embodied in traditions, as in a long standing club such as ESLS; but just as much in key volunteers.

A vision, combined with a positive approach, allowed clubs to take advantage of support (such as the Sport England Club Matters resources) and opportunities to develop such as grants for developing facilities (Northern Hope, Market Harborough) or work with new groups. This illustrates that government support can be valuable, if clubs want to use it. For example, Market Harborough used information from support organisations such as Volunteering Leicester and the Sport England Club Matters website. Club committee members had been to Sport England Club Matters workshops on Club Finances which they found useful and the treasurer has access to their website for help with financial issues. The club has also used Sport England's workshops on Inspired Facilities, workshops for funding, and their site for looking at club development plans.

Supporting training and coaching

Volunteering, especially for young people, can be encouraged by supporting training, such as gaining coaching qualifications. However, this is dependent on funds being available – obviously this contrasts with other European countries.

Fig.13: Volunteers provide water at 'break time', Leuven Bears, Belgium (SIVSCE Work Package 5). © Parantee.

6.2 Social inclusion in sports clubs – English good practice examples

Key members' vision for development – synergy with the club objectives

'Social inclusion' by definition is reaching out to new groups who would not otherwise join the club (4). For a club to try and recruit members who would not normally join of their own accord requires a commitment from key members (the same has been found in recent studies of clubs developing opportunities for disabled participants in Australia). The willingness to do this also has to reflect the vision and ethos of the club. The objectives of the club, although they may not be formally defined, can be thought of as a balance between service delivery (providing a service for someone else), mutual aid (expressing a shared enthusiasm for the sport and allowing it to be played), and conviviality (rewarding

social relations). This balance is different for each club (Fig. 14), for example in some clubs the social rewards may be more important than playing the sport. From our cases, Northern Hope wanted to work with young people excluded from school as part of the mission of its founder, which represents service delivery. Market Harborough wanted to increase membership of women and young people for the long-term future of the squash club, to strengthen its teams. This represents some service delivery, but also mutual aid. An inclusive approach is inherent to the ethos of Parkrun, which welcomes all runners.

So social inclusion has to have synergy with the club objectives, and should have a 'champion' or 'champions' to promote it within the club.

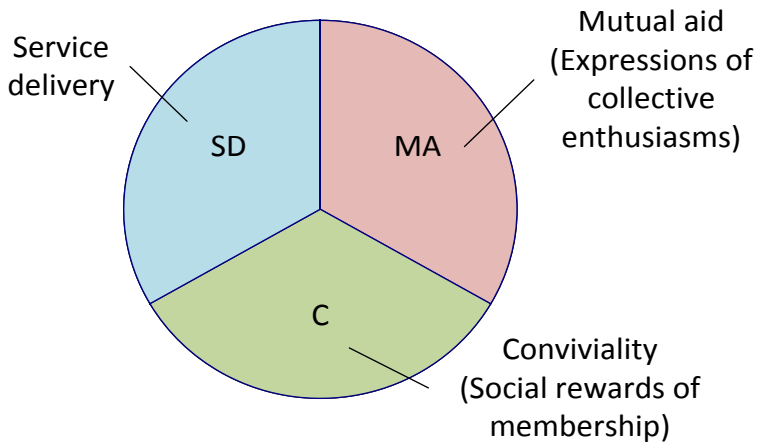

Fig 14: Balancing sports club priorities (Nichols, 2017, p 45)

As sports clubs are independent, and as volunteers are not bound to a club by the need to earn a wage, government policy can only have limited influence. Some clubs will not be motivated to share government policies, know what they are, or have individuals willing to put in the extra effort to implement them (15). Therefore, what clubs do reflects the values and work of key volunteers.

External support

As in volunteer development, the vision of key club members and the willingness to make the extra effort is a pre-requisite to using external support, such as Sport England funded schemes. The clubs are independent organisations and will take advantage of support if it helps them meet their own aims. However, exactly as in the support for volunteering, support and schemes were helpful. It is worth noting that the extent and range of support from government is much less than in many other European countries – examples of support in Denmark, the Netherlands and Switzerland can be found in Sections 3.1-3.3.

Working with other organisations

Developing new members is facilitated by networks with other organisations. For example, Market Harborough made links with local schools and Northern Hope with a special school for excluded young people.

6.3 European good practice examples; promoting volunteering and social inclusion

The results from the English case studies were built into the results across the project, in Work Package 5. Case studies from other European countries give examples, especially of social inclusion projects, which may be interesting to English readers. There is not enough room to reproduce them in this report, so readers are referred to the Work Package 5 report on the main project website. However, these examples are in countries where much more support is given to this type of project and reflect local circumstances. For example, in some other countries the integration of immigrants is a much greater public concern, and more resources are allocated to this.

Fig.18: Market Harborough Squash Club members promoting Back the Bid 2020 campaign (SIVSCE Work Package 5). © Market Harborough Squash Club.

Good practice in promoting volunteering in Europe

- The Work Package 5 report concluded that written club policies were valuable, including those on recruitment; the qualifications required of volunteers; and volunteer recognition. The best balance between formal and informal management in voluntary organisations, especially those led by volunteers, is a matter of debate.
- It concluded that volunteers should be recruited more widely than from the club membership. There are limited examples of this in the English cases (see Northern Hope), however previous work in England has also made this recommendation, with examples of clubs who have been successful in doing this (16).
- Other volunteer benefits, such as free meals, uniforms, or vouchers were noted as useful in maintaining volunteer satisfaction, although not as primary motivations. In relation to Work Package one, it is worth noting that in several countries volunteers receive formal benefits in the tax system.

The extent to which clubs try to achieve social inclusion in Europe

Before looking at good practice in Europe it is worth noting there were considerable differences between the countries in the percentage of clubs responding to the club survey question (Work Package 2) asking if they had special initiatives for different target groups (Fig. 15). This indicates the extent to which they try to recruit members from groups who might not otherwise join the club. In the survey clubs were prompted for six groups they might have special initiatives for. Club respondents may have had difficulty defining an 'initiative' and also if it was targeted at specific 'target groups'. For example, the target group 'migration background' was defined as 'People that are foreigners or at least one of their parents is a foreigner or people belonging to an ethnic minority'. It might be difficult for one club respondent to know if club members had a migrant parent. However, in general, English clubs were less likely to have special initiatives than others in Europe.

This may reflect both fewer government initiatives in England, and less willingness of clubs to take part in government programmes. When English clubs did have such initiatives they were most likely to be for children, low-income groups or women.

However, the English club survey did not include specialist sport for development organisations, such as Street Games and Sported, who target disadvantaged young people, whilst the response rate from disability focused sports organisations was low. Therefore, the data for England probably doesn't reflect the full extent of initiatives designed to deliver greater social inclusion in sport, nor the progress that has been made to embed an inclusive philosophy in our sporting communities.

Across Europe people with a migration background are a special focus group for almost half of all Swiss sports clubs and about one third of clubs in Hungary, but only 6% of the clubs in England. Switzerland and Hungary were also more likely to have initiatives for women/girls and the elderly (defined as over 65). Hungarian clubs were most likely to have initiatives for the disabled (39%).

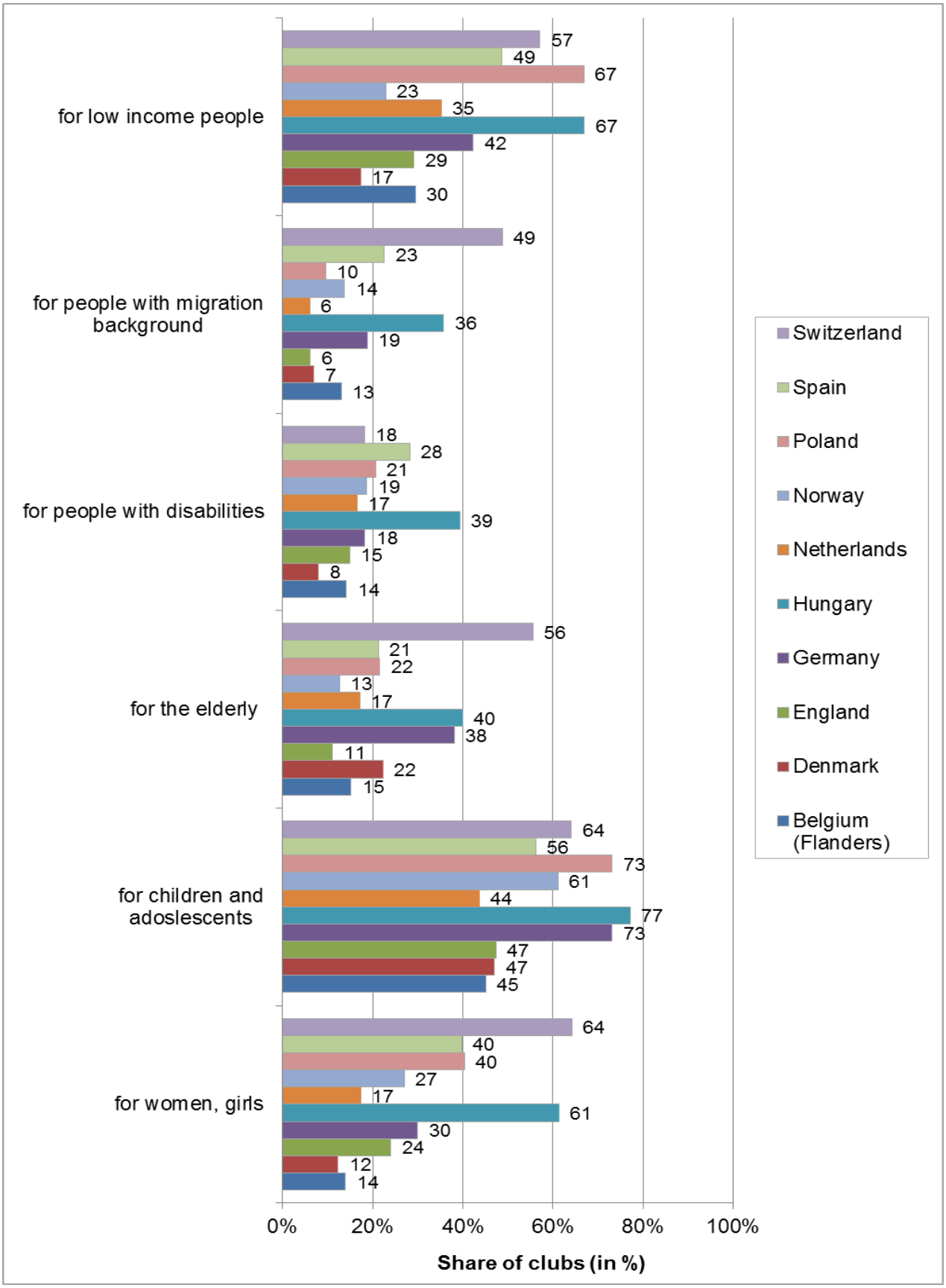

Fig. 15. Clubs with special initiatives for target groups (SIVSCE Work Package 2).

Good practice in social inclusion in Europe

Reporting on social inclusion the project differentiated between social inclusion as social integration in the club, and social inclusion and participation in the club contributing to social integration in broader society. However, only two examples were identified of the second. Integration in broader society is especially important in countries such as Germany and Denmark who have accepted a large number of asylum seekers. The Work Package 5 report considered integration of six different groups: ethnic minorities; migrants and refugees; underprivileged children; adolescents and adults; the elderly; people with disabilities; and females. Its conclusions were generalised across all these groups. It's worth noting that any one of these groups has been studied separately, and some were the subject of Sports Council demonstration projects in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Social integration in the club, whether in sports participation or social activities, was encouraged by (in addition to points described from the English cases):

- An offer which interested the target group. This may include unconventional forms of activity (e.g. shooting for hyperactive children or cycling for blind people).
- Activities at a time and place suitable to the target group. These should be available throughout the year.
- A price suitable for the target group. Cost was low, or free, in case study clubs. Free use of sports equipment, facilites and free training courses also helped target groups. In some clubs, membership fees varied according to ability to pay.
- Coaches serve as role models. They may offer counselling and advice beyond sport; so assist with social problems. This conclusion, and the three above, have been made in respect to sport programmes targeting young people at risk of being involved in crime, in England. They also apply to Doorstep Sports Clubs run by StreetGames. The skills of leaders in working with difficult groups and their positions of role models of behaviour can be more important than sports coaching skills (17).
- A committee or person should be responsible for fostering integration amongst vulnerable groups in the club.
- Ensuring the club provides social rewards of membership and recognising their importance. Space and time for social interaction is important.
- Linking club events to those in the local community.
- As in England, links with other organisations can be used to target different groups to those invovled already in the club and gain expertise and information.

Only two clubs were used as examples of social integration in broader society through volunteering in the club. This illustrates a difficulty of distinguishing between integration at the level of the club and of society, and showing that one leads to the other. This is not to say that club participation and volunteering does not potentially have this benefit – however, it is difficult to show evidence of it.

7. Conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the report

7.1 Conclusion

This is the first research project to compare sports clubs led by volunteers across Europe. The findings confirm that these clubs are important for providing opportunities to play sport, to volunteer, and for the associated social rewards.

Across European countries government support to clubs varies – in most it is greater than in England (Table 5). The degree of independence of the clubs from government also varies. In England it is particularly high, due to the development of clubs, development of NGBs and of volunteering from the late 19th century; and political stability since then.

Clubs' independence from government is a tradition in English sport and regarded as a right. The right of free voluntary association is recognised explicitly in the Danish constitution and valued as such. It is a recent privilege in some former Eastern Bloc countries, such as Poland and Hungary in this project.

The links between the structures of voluntary sector sport and government vary across Europe – this reflects their historical development. In England, with a long tradition of voluntary sector independence, they are not so strong. In Denmark, as an example, they are stronger. A balance has to be struck between valuing and respecting the independence of volunteer led sporting organisations from government and involving these organisations in government initiatives to promote social objectives.

The vast majority of clubs are older than governments, and some have survived through great political change such as in Germany, Spain, Poland and Hungary. This gives them continuity as an expression of social capital, in terms of social relationships and shared enthusiasms to provide a collective resource. The structure of clubs reflects their historical development. The network of over 60,000 clubs in England, 41% owning their own facilities, could never be recreated with present land prices and attitudes towards volunteering, this makes them a precious resource. The conditions in which the club structure was established also reflected a different balance between the voluntary, private and public provision of leisure opportunities.

However, the strengths and weaknesses of clubs have to be understood in contemporary society. Clubs need to adapt to the trend away from traditional team sports and those which take a long time to play, and need leadership from their NGBs to do this, or they may just decline in response to the changed demands for sport; which apply across Europe. There are similar trends towards time-limited, episodic volunteering. Overall the competition for the time, energy and enthusiasm of members and volunteers is greater as so many more opportunities for leisure time are available, and in England there is more pressure from paid work. This trend was noted ten years ago, in relation to sports clubs, and will continue (18).

Sports participation in clubs is subsidised by the voluntary work of members – the average adult annual club membership fee in England is £203. Work has not compared the cost of participation in sport with the private or public sector. The average membership fee is slightly more than membership of Pure Gym, at £15 per month; £18 a year.

If we accept that sports participation benefits health, and so does volunteering, then sports clubs will automatically provide these benefits. If achieving these benefits are public objectives, then subsidy of clubs is justified. To provide other benefits, such as promoting sport for particular target groups, a key individual has to champion this in the club, and other club members have to see sufficient synergy with the club aims. So clubs may support government sport polices if they match the vision of the club. Our case studies show where this has taken place. However, the clubs existed prior to, and independent of, these policies, so they are an 'add on' to the clubs' activities, if clubs choose to do this. In the case of Parkrun, being 'inclusive' in terms of encouraging those of all physical abilities, is part of its ethos.

Fig.16: Team talk during inclusive mixed ability rugby match (SIVSCE Work Package 5). © Club de Rugby Alcobendas, Spain.

Overall, clubs will apply for funds or seek support to promote volunteering or social inclusion if they want to, or have the capacity to deliver programmes. They are independent organisations and the willingness to apply/seek support will depend on the enthusiasm of key volunteers and synergy with the club objectives. It may also only be the larger clubs which have the capacity to pursue such activities, although our research has not tested this.

From the English case studies, it was concluded that key volunteers with 'people skills' and enthusiasm are critical for a successful club, in terms of increasing volunteering and promoting social inclusion. Theory has tended to stress the need for formal systems such as job descriptions and volunteer succession plans, but needs to acknowledge how managing volunteers is different, especially managing social relationships (19). Support, such as websites promoting good practice in volunteer management, can be useful, but need to be used by these key volunteers.

7.2 Recommendations

Government policies, and the ability of sports clubs to take advantage of them, have to be understood within their own political context. So one can't transpose a policy from Denmark to England, for example.

Secondly, the ability to influence policy depends on one's positon in the policy hierarchy. For example, a more equal society may be associated with higher levels of volunteering, sports participation, trust, and welfare policies. Having a vision for a 'better' society and how to get there is a role for national politicians. However, Sport England, Sport Wales and local government have to work within the policy framework they are set. Clubs have to work within narrower parameters.

Policies of national government may have a greater, and counter, effect on sports participation and volunteering than policies of organisations whose role it is to promote sport. For example, it is likely that an increasing levels of inequality in UK society will reduce sports participation and volunteering. Taking this into account, Sport England may have succeeded if it can hold sports participation static.

Fig. 17: Start of the Starcross to Exmouth open water swim in 2015 (SIVSCE Work Package 5). © Exmouth Swimming and Life Saving Society 2016.

Policies to be considered for supporting sports clubs

- Allocating and planning most public subsidy at local government level, where it is most sensitive to local needs.
- Subsidised facility use by clubs. This might overcome the fears of 9% of clubs, in 2015, that access to facilities threatened their existence. There needs to be a review of how access to facilites can be ensured when management is transferred to trusts.
- A subsidy directly to support junior members up to the age of 25. If this was done using a 'leisure card' owned by the young person, it would allow them to choose where to participate. If this was a fee to clubs, per young member, funding and performance would be tightly linked. The focus on young people recognises the importance of developing 'sporting social capital'. This might help combat child obesity and the drop-out of sport between ages 16 and 25.
- Subsidising coaching qualifications. This was provided in other countries, such as Switzerland. The ability to find qualified coaches has become a more significant problem to English clubs, as shown by a recent survey for Sport England (20).
- Overall – value the voluntary sector for its contribution to a pluralist society – as in Denmark. Recognise its independence but help it where its own objectives have a synergy with aims of public policy.
- The network of over 60,000 sports clubs led by volunteers in England is a precious legacy because of its role in providing opportunties to take part in sport and providing social capital. It has a long history, but is vulnerable to changes in volunteering, sports participation and relationships with the public sector.

Recommendations to promote volunteering

- Government should consider financial benefits for volunteers (tax concessions on volunteers' expenses, or a direct payment). A danger is that these may undermine a moral committment to volunteer.
- Sport England and Sport Wales are already promoting the rewards of volunteering to the volunteer; we were not aware of similar promotions in other countries.
- Clubs promote a moral commitment to volunteer by setting expectations when club members join. Parkrun does this to good effect. This may be an example of where it's necessary to counter other trends in society, such as a consumerist attitude to leisure; transient communities; work-life imbalance and greater inequality.
- Clubs offer new volunteers small roles initially, with a view to developing their skills and confidence to take more demanding tasks if they want to. Accept some volunteers may only want limited roles, in line with the trend towards episodic volunteering.
- Clubs set an expectation that volunteers can, and will, retire. This can be done by setting a time limit on volunteer roles.
- Clubs achieve a balance between fitting the volunteer to the task; and adapting the task for the volunteer.
- NGBs and national organisations promote the role of a 'volunteer coordinator' in clubs, while recognising that it is more important to have someone with the right personal skills and enthusiasm doing this role than it is to define it on paper.

- NGBs and national organisations continue to provide support on volunteer management; such as on Sport England and Sport Wales websites.
- Clubs can enhance the social interaction of club members to improve voluntering with simple changes in the physical layout of the club facilites. This is easier for clubs who own their own facilites – others will need to make other arrangements.
- Publically thank and acknowledge volunteers.

Recommendations to support social inclusion

- National organisations such as Sport England should continue to provide grants for programmes and support online; but recognise that this will be taken up where it matches the vision of key club members and ethos of the club and where clubs have the capacity to deliver. Possibly in other European countries there is more overlap between the aims of government and clubs, as illustrated by the larger number of clubs with special initiatives for target groups. On the other hand, the UK may lead in legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act and clubs may have a generally positive attitude to including others.
- Social inclusion can most easily be promoted through organisations which build it into their ethos, such as Parkrun.
- Inclusion is often achieved through links and formal partnership working with other organisations.
- The European project drew a set of conclusions, including: providing an attractive activity at a suitable time, place and price; coaches having skills as counsellors and mentors, and acting as role models; using links to other organisations working with these target groups; emphasising social rewards, and making links to other community events. These reflect the experiences of European clubs in programmes to target groups such as migrants and the disabled.

7.3 Limitations of the report and project

This report has had to be selective in only using three countries from Work Package 1 to take examples of government policies and support to sport. It has also been selective in focusing on the four case study clubs from England. This may have missed useful examples from other countries. The full Work Package reports on the project website provide more details (visit www.sdu.dk/SIVSCE).

In identifying 'good practice' the project relied on the reports of case study clubs, rather an objective measure of success. It would not have been possible to conduct case studies in this depth with the resources available.

8. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the volunteers from clubs who have taken part in the study by completing questionnaires and case study interviews. It has been a pleasure to work with our European colleagues who have contributed so much work to this project.

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9. Appendices – The Four English Case Study Clubs

9.1 Market Harborough Squash Club, Leicestershire

Founded	Members #	Sports/related activities
1970s	290-300	Squash and racketball

Good practice elements

In terms of volunteering:

1. The ability to offer small, defined, volunteer roles for those who only feel they can give a little time, or to get members initially involved.
2. Recognising the importance of the social rewards of membership and enhancing this,
3. Making new members welcome.
4. Planning for succession of the key roles, but in an informal way.
5. The influence of key committee members on the ethos of the club and by being able to contribute particular skills.
6. Established volunteers realising they will need to give way to new ones with new ideas at some time.
7. Use of all means of communication to keep members informed and involved.
8. Sport and personal development of young people are seen to go together.

In the terms of social integration:

1. Influence of the national campaign by Sport England.
2. Partnership work with local government.
3. The club has sufficient credibility for local government to approach them.
4. The value of building social rewards into membership.

Description of the club

The club was formed in the 1970s by a cricket club, with which it shares grounds. In recent years the squash club has increased membership and the cricket club has reduced members, so now the squash club is the stronger partner. Only two years ago the relationship between the two clubs was reconstituted such as all adult members of both clubs have voting rights at annual general meetings and extraordinary general meetings.

The clubs have independent committees and run separately, although there is some cross over of members. Each can help to raise the profile of the other.

The club owns the facilities and leases the land from a charity. (This means they can set their own membership fees and court fees, which might not be possible if using a local authority facility). The squash club has five courts. These are also used for pilates during the day.

It is a membership club, so only members can play. There are about 240 adult members and 50/60 juniors. The club has recently gained members from other local clubs which have closed. Members can pay annually or monthly, and there are full, off peak, family and junior categories with no additional court fees. This may make the club's membership more expensive than some, but with no court fees actually encourages people to play more, and then the club gets the benefits of people using the bar etc. afterwards in the week. From a

club management point of view, it means the club knows its income and does not have to rely on additional income from court fees which can be unknown amounts.

The club employs a part-time cleaner and four part-time bar staff. All other roles are taken by volunteers. This includes roles on a management committee and a range of other roles – such as bar work and maintaining the building. Each of the 7 teams has a volunteer captain and there are two female volunteer coaches, and five male volunteer coaches.

Alison and her husband joined the club seven years ago, from another club, and saw ways it could be developed. They volunteered for the committee and gradually gained members' confidence and trust as they became more involved and developed a vision for the club. Alison had trained as a physiotherapist and had previously worked as a manager in the National Health Service. This experience has helped her in her volunteer role in the club, which she combines with paid work as a pilates instructor, also at the club. So she is at the club most of the day, and she put it, 'almost lives there'.

The club caters for all levels of ability, from elite players, to grass roots, and the youngest member is aged four. This balance of abilities is good for the club as there are role models for a progression of ability, but also a thriving social environment.

Good practice elements - Promoting volunteering to adult members

The club is seen as a community – some members will just want to play, but the social aspect of membership is important for others and the committee arranges activities to allow for this. For example, a new members evening is run to help new people get to know each other and feel part of the club. Spaces in the club have been created to enable social mixing, such as comfy chairs in the bar and viewing area. A space has been made for parents to meet informally during Saturday morning junior sessions.

Small and limited volunteering roles allow people to get involved gradually. An example was two weekends which were used to decorate the club building. All ages of members could take part in jobs like painting. This created a great community atmosphere as it was combined with a social event, similar to the England and Wales Cricket Board 'groundforce' weekends. The event allowed volunteers with particular skills to come forward.

Seven adults have been supported to take coaching awards. All seven coaches have their disclosure and barring service (DBS – required for work with young people under 18), coaches' membership with England Squash and any additional continuing professional development (CPD) requirements such as child protection and first aid training; paid for by the club and the club encourages the coaches to go to England Squash CPD training sessions when able.

From a membership survey conducted by the club a finding was that some people were not aware of volunteering roles they could take. This has led to the club producing a list of roles so members can be aware of what is available. Communication with members is very important. A monthly club newsletter is distributed electronically and its use is monitored – so the club know if it has been read. There are notice boards around the club. A club Facebook page is used more by younger members. A Twitter account is used more by outside organisations. Courses and courts can all be booked 'online', o the club has embraced all methods of communication to reach all audiences.

The club has been promoted using booklets and leaflets distributed to local households. Social events are marketed to parents via their children. There is some overlap with children at the cricket club.

Although membership forms do not ask for skills members could contribute, the informal social contact with committee members means that the committee become aware of what members could offer. This means they can ask members directly when a suitable opportunity arises, or gently guide them towards roles.

There is not a formal volunteer succession policy, but it exists surreptitiously, as the committee encourages members to develop volunteer commitment. Alison realises that to allow new volunteers to come forward and take the main roles she, and the existing volunteers, will have to be prepared to 'let go' and allow the new people to try out new ideas.

Alison and the committee have picked up ideas from voluntary support organisations – such as Volunteering Leicester, and from the Sport England Club Matters website. This gave advice on using social media. Club committee members have been to Sport England Club Matters workshops on Club Finances which they found really useful and the treasurer has access to their site as well for help with financial issues. The club has also used Sport England's workshops on Inspired Facilities, workshops for funding, and their site for looking at club development plans.

Alison's vision of the club is as a community, in which volunteering is a key contribution. She was brought up in a family where this was the norm so, this has influenced her view of the club.

Good practice elements – Promoting volunteering and participation by young people

All junior members are allowed to use the court at no cost during the day. Juniors who come to the club coaching sessions get free off-peak membership. Parents of younger junior members then often join to bring them along to practice. As with adult membership, there are no junior court fees. Juniors only start paying membership when they start playing in the club leagues or want to play in peak time. This membership is only £8 per month. This means the courts are very popular with juniors in the school holidays. While a high proportion of young people in the area attend university, this is always in another town, as there is not a university locally. Young people who attend university are also allowed to use the courts with no charge in the university holidays. This is to keep them connected to the club and the sport, and as role models for the junior members (in contrast, they would normally have to pay court fees while playing at university). Similarly, if young people return to Market Harborough to live after attending university they are allowed to join for a year at the junior rate.

The youngest junior is aged four. The game can be adapted for young people using different balls.

Alison's vision is for club membership to develop young people to be 'nice people' as well as squash players – the two go together, and she is proud of compliments that have been paid to junior members by other clubs. Being brought up in a family which volunteered, Alison believes that if this can be instilled into young people it will develop the future club volunteers. Thus there is an ethos of volunteering built into the junior section, and the club as a whole.

Unlike in some other sports there is not a junior volunteering award, however 7 or 8 young people have used volunteering at the club as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award. This has involved young people coaching others. However, young people do not seem to be primarily motivated by external rewards from volunteering, such as adding to their CV. Occasionally a course has been run for junior assistant coaches. One junior was supported to take a level 1 coaching award, which is the one adults would take. This cost £230 and takes a weekend.

To encourage junior players the club took part in Sport England's Sportivate scheme, in which clubs are linked to schools. This normally involves the club setting up a junior section in a school, but for squash it has to involve young people coming to the club to play. Within this a local school has brought older children to use the club for one term a year, free of charge. This has led to some joining as juniors. Sport England provided some funding for extra kit and coaching sessions for the first few months but the club now provides this as part of normal practice.

At one school the club runs an after school club. One school has come at lunchtimes for one term to enable sports course children try squash.

Links with senior schools will change next year as at present the link is with the one school which has children over 14. Two other schools run from 11-14 years old. Next year all three schools will cover all age groups, so this will give the potential of arranging inter-school competitions.

In a separate scheme the club has made links with eight primary schools. Community Postcode Lottery funding and funding from the local authority, together with some sponsorship form local firms, has allowed mini-squash walls to be installed in the schools. These enable children of their age to practice hitting a modified ball against the wall and hitting it back. Teaches were trained how to use it. These 'rebound walls' have been in place since November 2015. The club has not seen the rewards yet but now the walls are in the schools the next phase is to go out again to them, running weekly sessions for a month, and then getting the schools to bring the children to the club for an inter schools' festival

To encourage juniors the club has encouraged a senior junior member to join the club committee.

Good practice elements - Promoting sport to women

Influenced by Sport England's 'This Girl Can' campaign (www.sportengland.org/our-work/women/this-girl-can/) the local authority contacted the club to set up a scheme to promote squash to women. The club's female coach provided a good role model, as she is a mother with three young children. She helped recruit women from school playgrounds. Some had played squash before but others were new to it.

One free session was offered, and 7 at the rate of £3 each. If a woman attended all eight she was given a free racquet and ball; 14 participated regularly. A social event was also provided.

Participants were given a free t-shirt. Eight joined the club and have competed in the club closed competition and joined special ladies' leagues, which the club developed to promote them playing

This initiative will be repeated, and this is made easier by the recent expansion of the number of courts to five. At the same time, a careful balance has to be kept between the needs of all members, for example, in deciding the best night for a 'club night'. A club night

is open to all members and is a way for people to get to play short friendly games with people they may not normally play, helping them find new partners to play against.

Parents, male and female, have also joined as a result of their children joining the coaching.

Central elements for the activities of the club

- The vison and skills the secretary and key committee members bring to the club
- Willingness to use Sport England support and advice. A general positive attitude to opportunities.
- Willingness to work with other organisations – such as schools.
- Use of all possible methods of communication with members, using all technologies.
- A developmental approach towards junior members, to encourage them to remain with the club.
- Recognition of the value of social aspects of membership, and facilitating these.

Sources for further information about the club

Website: http://www.harboroughcsc.co.uk/ - homepage for the sports club

9.2 Exmouth Swimming and Life Saving Society (ESLSS), Devon

Founded	Members #	Sports/related activities
1893	311	Swimming & Life Saving

Good practice elements

1. The club has a complete set of policies and codes of practice in place to help ensure that volunteers are managed effectively.
2. Detailed role descriptions for all the key volunteer positions within the club exist.
3. As a start-up parents are offered to volunteer in episodic events.
4. The club acknowledges the contribution made by volunteers during annual meetings.

Reasons for choosing this club as a European Good Practice

Although the club's ethos is very much an inclusive one, ESLS are included here as an example of good practice in volunteering. ESLS is a well governed club with a robust committee structure, which is comprised entirely of 20+ volunteers. ESLS have a complete set of policies and codes of practice in place to help ensure that volunteers are managed effectively, including, for example, policies for volunteer recruitment and succession planning. Detailed role descriptions also exist for all the key positions within the club, including, for example, Volunteer Coordinator and Training Coordinator. ESLS's status as a well governed club has been officially recognised by the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), the national governing body for aquatics in England, who have awarded ESLS "swim 21" accreditation, which provides national recognition for clubs that are trying to provide the best possible experience for swimmers, and to retain and increase the number of volunteers, teachers and officials.

Description of the club

Exmouth Swimming and Life Saving Society (ESLS) was founded in 1893 in the port town of Exmouth, which is located in East Devon and sited on the east bank of the mouth of the River Exe. Lessons and Water Polo were seasonally taught in Exmouth Docks until the club moved to the salt water pool on Exmouth sea front. ESLS moved to its current base at Exmouth Leisure Centre when the pool was built in 1985. The Leisure Centre is now operated by LED Leisure Management Ltd on behalf of East Devon District Council. ESLS use the pool to deliver swimming lessons to 180 children every Saturday night, and to run a competitive & development section on Friday nights for approximately 100 swimmers. It is unusual in the United Kingdom for a swimming club to be the main provider of swimming lessons as most swimming pool operators will do this exclusively themselves. ESLS negotiated this agreement when the club relocated to the Leisure Centre from the lido. ESLS are therefore able to seamlessly cater for the entire aquatic pathway and are able to generate income from their own Learn to Swim programme. ESLS also run masters and open water sections, and are responsible for administering the East Devon Mini League, which six swimming clubs from the district compete in. ESLS is managed entirely by

volunteers and only employ one individual, who is the head coach of the club's Learn to Swim programme.

Good practice elements

ESLS's long history of community service as the only swimming club in the local area and Exmouth's standing as a relatively small, close knit community have helped to establish a strong ethos of volunteerism and sense of solidarity; which has clearly sustained ESLA throughout its history, helping the club to attract a steady supply of volunteers, partners and supporters to undertake vital roles and assist the club. This is evident in the way ESLS, local schools, community groups, businesses and sports clubs from Exmouth support each other through, for example, reciprocal volunteering arrangements, sharing facilities, pooling resources and through sponsorship. The lead volunteers at ESLS clearly appreciate the symbiotic nature of their relationship with the other organisations and institutions of Exmouth, and thus provide volunteers for the local beach rescue service, run the local school and college swimming galas, and in turn benefit from good relations with the local rugby club, town council and local business community (e.g. team kit sponsorship).

"The Society is very ingrained in the local community. It started in the docks, before moving to the lido and eventually to the Leisure Centre. People that are born and bred here all know about the Society," Martin Pashley, Committee Member.

Good governance at ESLS is provided by the main committee and six sub committees, which try to meet on a monthly basis; a full set of policies and codes of practice, including policies for volunteer recruitment and succession planning; and detailed role descriptions for all the key positions within the club, including descriptions for Volunteer Coordinator and Training Coordinator. All of these governance instruments can be viewed on the club's website - see link at the end of this report. This helps to ensure that there are a sufficient number of volunteers; that volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities; and that ESLS are transparent in regard to how the club's affairs are managed. This approach was recently exemplified by the Competitive Sub Committee, which undertook a survey of parents that has resulted in the production of an action plan.

ESLS's methods for recruiting volunteers are on the whole informal, apart from inviting all the club's parents to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM), when parents are encouraged by the Chairperson to become involved; and also at swimming galas when a list of volunteer roles is implemented to ensure all the tasks are being fulfilled. As current committee member Martin Pashley explained:

"It's an informal and slow process. We ask them to help with the refreshments at galas or to help pack away. It definitely helps to start with the easier roles so people feel comfortable, such as giving out medals… realising that was nice and that you are part of something positive in your local community. We try to ease them in gradually and we actually say it, and we're not shy about saying it - 'we need help.'"

Several committee members reported that it is often at galas when parents will offer to volunteer for this first time, which by their very nature are episodic volunteering events.

Committee members stated that getting parents to help out at galas with small simple tasks can sometimes act as a stepping stone into more substantial voluntary roles at the club. Committee member Marcus Allen, who has responsibility for new members and the mini aquatics league, highlighted some of the benefits that volunteering at galas affords parents, which can be helpful to state when trying to recruit parents:

"Since I became a judge I don't have to queue for seats at galas, get to watch my children swim, get a nice lunch half way through the session. But most importantly, it helps to sell the role, as without the volunteers the meets wouldn't take place."

As with the vast majority of voluntary run sports clubs, committee members at ESLS reported that finding willing volunteers for the club's main officer positions is particularly difficult, and is often a case of waiting for the right person to come along. The club also appreciate that it can be impossible for some volunteers to continue in these roles for long periods, as Jane Easton, chairperson of the Competitive sub committee observed:

"The club is grateful for any help and we wouldn't condemn any person for not sticking with it routinely, we'd say whatever you can do is great."

ESLS have a good track record of retaining volunteers with several of the current committee members continuing to volunteer for the club long after their own children have ceased being members. Recognising and rewarding the contribution of their volunteers is a vital part of the retention strategy, and committee members reported that they always try to thank volunteers in person. The club also provides tangible rewards for volunteers at their annual awards giving night. Every young person that has volunteered with the club for a period of up to six months is presented with a retail voucher worth £10 and those that volunteer for up to 12 months receive a voucher worth £25. The highest reward that the club can bestow on a volunteer is Life Membership, as Jane Easton attests to: *"The ultimate thing the club does is to make people a life member. I was awarded it this year and it was a real honour."* ESLS also use social nights as a way of rewarding volunteers and building camaraderie, but it is practically impossible to ensure all the volunteers are in attendance when the club is active most evenings of the week.

ESLS enables its volunteers, including young volunteers aged under 18, to attend training courses free of charge, such as ASA coaching qualifications and mandatory courses such as safeguarding & protection children and First Aid training. Committee members did report difficulties with accessing local training courses given Exmouth's location, which means the club's volunteers often have to travel considerable distances for these courses as a result.

ESLS encourages its young members into volunteering and caters for local school pupils needing to complete volunteering work in order to fulfil their Duke of Edinburgh or ASA Young Aquatics Volunteer awards, or coaching as part of controlled assessments for their GCSE physical education courses. Young members are encouraged to help out with the

Saturday evening *learn to swim* sessions and those that are rewarded with places on ASA training courses. However, to access these courses they must first write to the relevant sub committee to request support as part of their personal development. Nevertheless, ESLS committee members appreciate that it is difficult for most of the club's young members to find the time for volunteering given many are so committed to their swimming that they will be spending up to 14 hours per week in the pool training.

Central elements for the activities of the club

ESLS have served the people of Exmouth and the surrounding estuary area for almost 125 years. This has bred a strong ethos of volunteering and solidarity amongst the membership and means local people have great affection for the club. ESLS have capitalised on their heritage by establishing mutually beneficial relationships with the owners of Exmouth Leisure Centre and other local organisations and clubs; through good governance via effective management and sub-committees; and by maintaining the strong ethos of volunteering, thanks to the measures they have taken to recruit, reward and recognise their volunteers. Underpinning all of this is the tight knit community of Exmouth, where the onus on residents to help deliver local services and sports clubs remains strong as the private sector is less likely to be interested and family ties to clubs still run deep.

Sources for further information about the club

Website: http://www.exmouthswimming.org/ - homepage for the sports club

9.3 Northern Hope Gym Club, Birtly, Co. Durham

Founded	Members #	Sports/related activities
1989	400	Gymnastics

Good practice elements

In terms of volunteering:

1. Setting an expectation of volunteering associated with membership.
2. The importance of creating the social atmosphere and conditions to engender volunteering.
3. The importance of allowing volunteers to take small limited roles initially.
4. Enabling a balance between the jobs the club needs doing and those the volunteers feel able to offer.
5. The positive atmosphere surrounding the club, set by its founder's vison for it.
6. The use of volunteer awards for young people, but the need to balance this with the need of young people to gain paid work.

In the terms of social integration:

1. Access to a group excluded from sport and society being made through an intermediate organisation (their school) via a personal contact (the parent of a gymnast).
2. The ability and power of the supportive positive set of expectations – in a completely new setting – to engender changes in behaviour.
3. The key role of skilled activity leaders.
4. The willingness of the club to offer special activities for this extremely difficult group.
5. The adaption of sessions to meet the needs of this group.

Reasons for choosing this club as good practice

The club has been successful in developing participation in new premises, supported by the National Lottery. It promotes volunteering as part of the ethos of the club and has successfully worked with a group of young people excluded from mainstream school.

Description of the club

The club has 400 members from pre-school age to 18. There are 15 volunteer coaches and another five volunteers taking administrative roles. These 20 form a management committee. In addition, numerous other roles are taken by volunteers; for example, looking after the tuck shop, fundraising or making costumes.

The club has its own premises – a large factory space it took over in 2012 and adapted to its needs by dividing it up.

Sessions are run every evening from 4pm to 8pm, for groups of different ages and ability. There are also sessions three times a week during the day for pre-school groups.

Lynn is employed part-time at the club and volunteers for the rest of the time. She founded the club in 1989 and when it moved into the new building in 2012 she gave up her previous part-time paid work to spend all her time running the club and coaching. The part time wage at the club just compensates for the paid work she had to give up.

Some coaches are paid and some are voluntary. The volunteer coaches are supported by the club to take coaching classes which cost £400. For example, a young person may take a coaching course and agree to give back a member of hours of coaching. The club pays for volunteers over the age of 18 to take the necessary 'disclosure and barring' check.

The development of the new building in 2012 was supported by a grant of £50,000 from Sport England. Members come from a 20-mile catchment area which is considerable for one hour sessions. Gymnasts from the club win national level competitions.

Good practice elements - Promoting volunteering

Lynn founded the club because she believed the positive social atmosphere of the club was just as important as the gymnastics and she wanted to create a club like this.

Everybody is treated with respect and friendliness. This fosters relationships where people will volunteer and support the club.

The membership pack outlines the aims of the club including developing: self-discipline, commitment, sportsmanship, respect for others and enjoyment of life. So a positive development of young people through gymnastics is an explicit ethos of the club.

The membership form explicitly states the club would like parents to become more involved, a range of volunteer role are needed, but they do not need to be a long term commitment. The membership form asks parents to indicate specific roles they could help with and responses are kept on a club data store.

Thus, an expectation of volunteering is built into the first contract with the club. A range of small and time limited rules are offered to initially allow people to become involved.

Lynn will ask parents directly if they can help with something. There is also an expectation that anyone can ask her almost anything. So the strong network of social relationships in the club makes it easy to recruit volunteers.

Before the new building opened in 2012 it was an empty shell; therefore, it was possible to design it to fit the club's needs. A parents' viewing room was created – which is unusual in gym clubs – where parents could watch their children, meet other parents and drink coffee – thus supporting the café. This means that parents stay while their children are doing the session – the distances travelled to attend mean they would have to stay somewhere anyway. This develops social networks between parents – most of whom have not met before – and helps create a club identity. This makes it easy to get parents involved. It also allows them to support their child if needed, but also to retain a distance from the session.

The development of the new centre also allowed a conference room to be built which enabled coaching courses to be held. This means volunteers do not have to travel – what could be considerable distance - for a three-day course.

The support of parents is illustrated by a group spontaneously organising fundraising to support gymnasts attending an event at the national gymnastics centre. One parent changed her holiday arrangements to attend the event.

So there is a balance between the volunteer roles defined by the club and the ones parents decide to take. The range of small volunteering tasks allow volunteers to get involved initially with limited commitment.

This example shows the importance of strong social relationships in promoting volunteering and how in this case these are promoted by the club manager, the club values and the design of the building.

Young people in the club from the age of 13 are encouraged to take a young leaders award – which is promoted by the British Gymnastics Association. However, young people generally want to be paid for coaching rather than volunteer. This is partly a reflection of other paid work opportunities; for example, shop work; and parents' encouragement to take them. The club has decided it is better to pay young coaches a low wage than to lose them. However, those who volunteer are rewarded with more support in taking coaching courses.

One young volunteer was able to be employed as a volunteer apprentice scheme. This is a government scheme run through a local group called Lifetime. Successful applicants can get a small grant – the volunteer from Northern Hope was not successful in getting a grant. However, an incentive of the scheme is that the candidate can get a diploma in various types of work to help with the role of their job. The Northern Hope candidate is taking a qualification as a Level 2 fitness instructor. Every month a Lifetime tutor comes into the workplace to assist with the student. The tutor support is free. The club pays the wages of the candidate.

Parents are also encouraged to take coaching qualifications.

One example was given of a volunteer who was recruited from outside the club through a volunteer support agency. She was an older person and became an enthusiastic volunteer for three years, but left very reluctantly to take another role nearer her home; as it was a long journey to the gym club, especially for the winter. This shows it is possible to recruit volunteers from outside the club, but this is an exception.

There is limited support with coaching course fees from the local county sport partnership (an organisation partly funded by Sport England), which may pay the fees. However, the applicant has to have already accepted a place on a course before they can apply for a grant, so has to be confident they can afford it without support.

Good practice elements – Social Integration

The club ran special sessions for young people aged 11-17 who had been excluded from main-stream schools and were in a 'special school' in Newcastle (10 miles away).

The sessions were arranged by the parent of a gymnast who was a teacher at the school. Initially only four or five children were taken at one time. Their behaviour was extremely unsocial; swearing, fighting and averse to any personal contact.

The sessions were extremely successful in changing behaviour. For example, participants learnt to accept physical contact and reciprocated relationships of respect. They were extended to 12 young people at a time – with a waiting list. Sessions were only 15 minutes long, with an extra three minutes 'free time' for good behaviour. This was as long as possible with this group, as they had a very short attention span.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to build on this work with further opportunities for these young people to develop, as they lived too far away to attend the gym club independently. There was no parental support, perhaps this was not possible.

Intensive training was done with two young people, who were exceptional gymnasts, to support them taking part in a national competition. But just before the event they dropped out. The reasons are not clear.

Other sessions have been run for adults and for parents. An adults' class was started for anyone in the area to come and train basic skills at any level. Some participants were pure beginners and some were retired gymnasts who wanted to continue but not compete, or adults who did gymnastics in their youth and want to relive it all over again.

A session for parents was linked to a fundraising event. Parents had the opportunity to have their children (club gymnasts) teach them gymnastics and put them through their paces. It was a fab night, both enjoyed by the parents and gymnasts alike. Certificates were presented to the parents at the end of the session.

Sessions for adults and parents show attempts to develop participation from new groups.

Central elements for the activities of the club

Both success in promoting volunteering and the willingness to integrate new, and difficult, groups, reflects the vision of the club's founder, who remains the Head Coach and Director. This vison includes the personal development of young people; including self-discipline, commitment, sportsmanship, respect for others and enjoyment of life; through gymnastics. Thus staff have to be role models as well as instructors. In particular, the Head Coach and Director had a very positive approach to trying to integrate the young people excluded from sport and society. The development of sessions for a group of young people excluded from sport and society was made through a personal contact. The expansion to the new building, which has been developed to encourage social interaction, was supported by a grant from Sport England.

Sources for further information about the club

Website: http://www.northernhope.co.uk/ - homepage for the sports club

9.4 Newent Parkrun, Gloucestershire

Founded	Members #	Sports/related activities
2013	Average 68 per week.	Athletics (running)

Good practice elements

1. Clear vision and "blueprint" provided by UK parkrun.
2. Professional "fit-for-purpose" IT and communications system provided by Parkrun UK.
3. All-embracing inclusive ethos: parkrun is free to participate, non-competitive, family orientated, and suitable for abilities.
4. Parkrun's success has been built on sound volunteer management principles and practices, including:
    - Careful recruitment of the Event Director role (volunteer coordinator).
    - Mandatory pre and post event recognition of volunteer contributions.
    - "Light touch" approach to volunteer recruitment, with new volunteers signposted into small roles and episodic volunteering facilitated.

Reasons for choosing this club as a European Good Practice

The Newent Parkrun is included here as an example of good practice in terms of both promoting volunteering and social integration through sport. Every parkrun is organised and run by a small team of volunteers, who are recruited each week from the runners. The exponential growth of the parkrun movement has been wholly dependent on thousands of willing volunteers, aside from a small team of paid staff at UK level who help with the initial set up of each parkrun. The parkrun movement is an exemplar of social integration, as each run is open to everyone, free of charge to join and enter, and, safe and easy to take part in. Parkrun is therefore able to offer hundreds of free events across the UK every week, which sees people of all ages and backgrounds taking part, furthering community cohesion and social inclusion as a consequence.

Description of the club

The Newent parkrun was established in 2013 and is part of the global parkrun movement that began in 2004 and is now present in 12 countries organising approximately 850 runs per week. Parkrun operate as an independent not-for-profit organisation, and require a one off start-up fee of £3,000 from groups wishing to establish an event, in order to meet their running costs and provide new parkruns with technical support and equipment for timekeeping, course marking and marshalling events.

The Newent parkrun is a 5km timed run held at the town's community school and sports centre every Saturday morning at 9am. It is organised and run entirely by volunteers. Participants must register online, where they are issued with a barcode. This gets scanned at the race and gives confirmation of completion as well as tracking individual run times. Overall responsibility for each parkrun rests with the Event Director. The Newent parkrun was instigated by Adele Mitchell, who is the incumbent Event Director. Newent itself is a small market town located 8 miles North West of the city of Gloucester.

Sports /related activities
Running is the sole activity of the club. The Newent parkrun is a weekly 5km timed run (not a race) that is free of charge to participate in and open to all ages and abilities. It takes place at Newent Community School & Sports Centre every Saturday morning, commencing at 09.00. The average number of runners per week is 62 and the highest number of runners that have taken part to date is 123. To take part, runners must register once with parkrun in order to receive a unique barcode that ensures they receive a time for each run they complete.

Good practice elements
From the outset, having to raise the £3,000 start-up fee serves to ensure a high degree of commitment and focus from each parkrun founder member who will typically become the Event Director. As parkrun UK state on their website:

"*The key to starting any parkrun is to find the right person to lead that event as a local volunteer, to champion its benefits to their community and to slowly but surely build a strong volunteer team to deliver the event going forwards."*

This was certainly the case for the Newent parkrun where founder and Event Director, Adele Mitchell, is acknowledged by fellow volunteer Clive Jones for providing *"a lot of the direction and drive"* and for her *"pivotal role."*

The start-up fee also secures support from the team of Parkrun staff, who will help the local volunteers to design a rewarding course for all abilities, and access to parkrun's IT support system, which enables volunteers to process the race times efficiently and provides each parkrun with its own professional website. Being part of the parkrun franchise therefore provides organisers with a tried and tested blueprint, vital support from the paid parkrun staff and a strong brand identity that runners and volunteers wish to buy into.

The non-competitive and totally inclusive nature of every parkrun has served to encourage participation in running and sports volunteering. Running or volunteering at a parkrun event is therefore less intimidating, more accessible and not "off limits" to any individual, whereas joining an athletics club or volunteering for a position at a traditional sports club can appear so for some people. The socially inclusive ethos particular to parkrun events is best explained by Newent parkrun volunteer Andrew Callard:

"It's more of a social activity that includes a run, and because it's not a club it's incredibly inclusive. The ethos of parkrun fosters social inclusion because basically it says 'turn up in a pair trainers' - that's all you've got to do. You don't have to pay any money, you've got people there that will help you, there is a course laid out. All you've got to do is take it at your own pace, it's not a race and there are people who just walk it."

Parkruns can therefore act as a stepping stone for some people into more serious running environments and other voluntary roles, resulting in further social inclusion. The Newent parkrun, for instance, acted as a catalyst for the establishment of the Newent Runners club, which now provides such opportunities and exists in symbiosis

with the Newent parkrun, generating runners and volunteers for each other. In addition, participating in a parkrun has become an end point for people enrolled on physical activity promotion programmes, often referred to as "walk to run" or "0-5km" schemes.

The principle of volunteering lies at the heart of parkrun. Numerous measures to promote, facilitate, recognise and reward volunteering have therefore been taken by parkrun UK, internet and social media measures particularly. Volunteering is promoted at a national level through the parkrun UK website, and at a local level through each individual parkrun website.

The UK parkrun website, for instance, has pages dedicated to volunteering, including one that informs visitors how they can volunteer and another that describes in detail 24 separate volunteer roles that people can fulfil. The website also informs visitors of the parkrun Volunteer Club that rewards anyone that volunteers on 25 separate occasions at any parkrun events with a free t-shirt. Volunteers are also rewarded with the maximum 100 points up to 3 occasions per year, so that they don't lose out in the annual points competition for not running. Finally, each member of the parkrun UK staff team demonstrates their commitment to the volunteering ethos by stating their favourite volunteer role in the staff section of the website.

The Newark parkrun website has two pages dedicated to volunteering, which provides visitors with everything they need to know about how to volunteer, what opportunities exist and how they will be recognised and rewarded for volunteering. In these pages, the names of all the volunteers at the last parkrun are listed and thanked in the '*this week's heroes section.*' The same volunteers are also publically thanked by the Event Director at the start of every race, as runners receive instructions behind the start line.

Those visiting the Newent parkrun website are encouraged to visit the volunteer roster webpage, and to email the Event Director if they wish to fill any of the 13 volunteer positions that need filling each Saturday for the next 4 weeks. The Event Director has also established a Newent parkrun Facebook page to enable weekly messages designed to both recruit volunteers and recognise their efforts each week.

Typically, Newent parkrun participants don't volunteer at the outset and are encouraged into volunteering by being asked what roles they would like to do, so that they hopefully end up performing tasks that they are comfortable with. The Newent parkrun, thus far, whilst being reliant on a core group of volunteers, including a few people who just volunteer and do not run, has never found itself short of the required number of volunteers to manage the event, as enough people have learned enough of the various roles that there is always someone able to fulfil a vacant role. In addition to the official roles, there are also participants that unofficially pace and/or coach other runners.

Finally, parkrun UK have teamed up with The Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award scheme in the UK to encourage young people to volunteer at parkrun events. Parkrun is consequently an Approved Activity Provider for the Volunteering section of the DofE award, which means young people can volunteer with parkrun in a variety of roles, whilst working towards their Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE awards.

Central elements for the activities of the club

The parkrun franchise is absolutely fundamental to the ethos, activities and performance of the Newent parkrun. Whilst the £3000 start-up fee is wholly atypical of the English sports club model, it does ensure that every parkrun event organiser is buying into a successful business model, benefits from the guidance and support of parkrun UK staff, and is equipped with a set of proven communications (e.g. website), marketing, operations and human resource (volunteer) management tools. In addition, the non-competitive, non-conditional and free at the point of entry nature of parkrun has created an ethos of social inclusion and camaraderie amongst participants, which renders comparison difficult.

Sources for further information about the club

http://www.parkrun.org.uk/newent/ - homepage for Newent parkrun
http://www.parkrun.org.uk/ - homepage for Parkrun UK
https://www.facebook.com/newentparkrun/ - Facebook page for Newent parkrun
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-36023503 - BBC article documenting the growth of parkrun since 2004.
http://www.newentrunners.com/ - homepage for Newent Runners

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Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

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