

Sported's Impact

April 2020 – March 2021



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Introduction

Sported is the **UK's largest network of community groups** promoting fairness and equity for young people through grassroots sport and physical activity. Not all young people have the same start in life, and we know that community sport and physical activity can help them **overcome barriers** to fulfil their potential. We provide professional expertise, resources, and operational support to **help community groups survive and help young people thrive**.

This Impact Report provides **insight** into how, in the past year, our work has helped community groups and young people across the UK. Through the insight we generated, **partnerships** we forged and the group leaders we **upskilled**, we have **collectively** broadened the opportunities for young people to better themselves physically, emotionally, and socially.

This report sets out **evidence** of the impact Sported has made during the financial year 2020/2021, a year of huge **difficulties** caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It highlights the **challenges** we supported our groups through, the activities we delivered and the **impact** of our work.



What we do

REACH

We support nearly 2,600 grassroots groups deeply rooted within their communities, 46% of which operate in the most deprived areas of the UK.

INCLUDE

Our network is open to any community group using sport or physical activity to make a difference to young people's lives.

The groups in our network tend to be small, voluntary-led organisations who are often under-funded and under-resourced.

EMPOWER

We champion the highly committed, passionate, local people who give up their time to run initiatives, to help young people from their community.

We provide groups with professional expertise, resources and operational support, free of charge, to help them survive and thrive.

How we do it

SERVE

Support and strengthen groups in our network

COLLABORATE

Create strategic partnerships

PROSPER

Resource our service

Who we support

2,572
community
groups

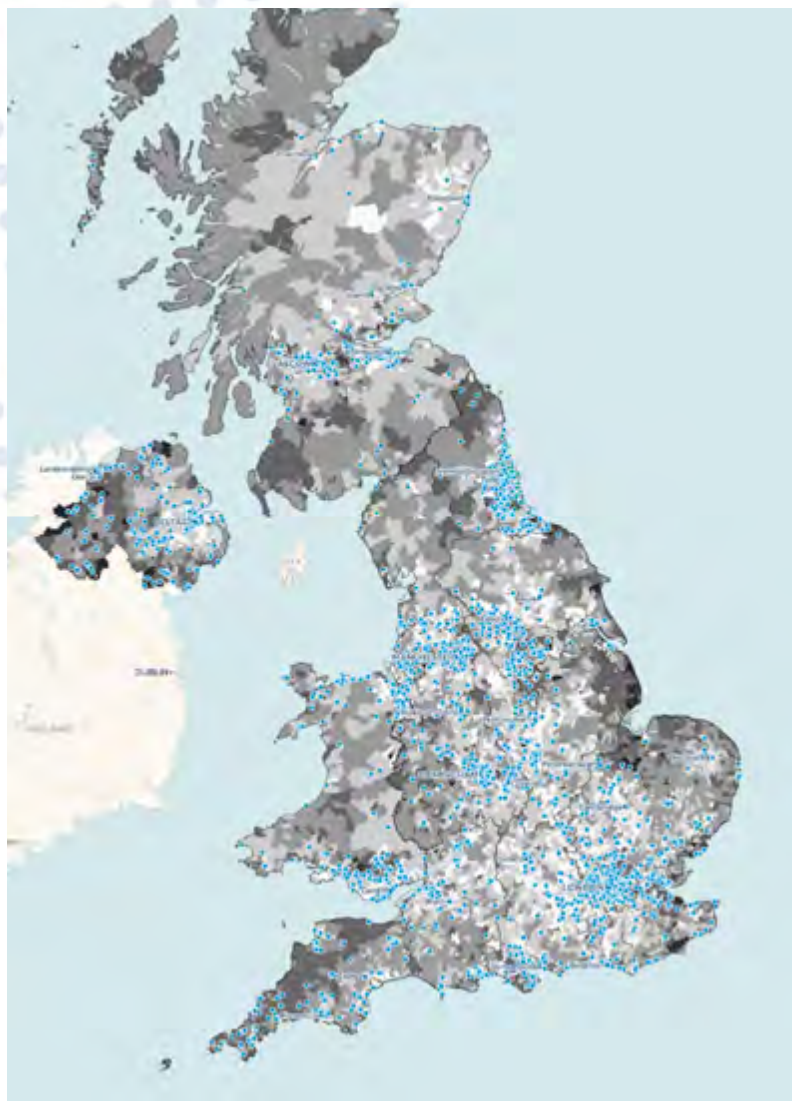
Reaching
481,202
young people

52%
entirely
volunteer led

90+
different sports
and activities

43%
have an
income under
£10k a year

46%
work in the 30%
most deprived
areas of the UK



Improving young lives and
communities across **five**
social outcomes:



14%

Crime & anti-
social behaviour



20%

Community
cohesion



26%

Health & wellbeing



15%

Education &
employability



25%

Inequality in sports
participation

Covid response

At the start of the pandemic, 25% of the community groups in our network weren't sure they'd still exist in 6 months' time, and the biggest challenge they said they faced was maintaining the wellbeing of their young people.

The main areas where groups have needed support throughout this year are:

- Funding support
- Financial planning
- Strategic & business planning
- Governance

We identified 3 phases that community groups experienced during the pandemic. We maintained regular contact with the groups in our network throughout the year and were able to tailor our support to meet their needs:

Phase 1: React (Mar-May 2020)

We ran **9 webinars** including sessions on fundraising and the Covid-19 response.

Our regional staff contacted groups directly to engage and offer additional support.

Phase 2: Refocus (Jun-Nov 2020)

We continued to offer our groups support tailored to their needs. This included the distribution of **175 grants** to the value of **£444,657**.

Phase 3: Recover (Dec 2020- Feb 2021)

We helped groups to navigate their **"return to play"**, providing support in planning around equipment, facilities and health and safety practices.

What the groups in our network have said...



If they could buy kit and cleaning equipment in bulk, and then distribute to all the groups, getting it to the clubs at cost price. We need to use our money really well to effect our communities."



He was on the phone to me for nearly 2 hours a night at one point just going through it. They don't have to do that but [Sported volunteers] are just so dedicated."



One of the things that's been really good in COVID is **they've offered loads of training and things**. I've learnt loads, when you've got time to further yourself."

Our Impact

The community sports groups in our network are always at the heart of everything we do. Our aim has always been to build the capacity and sustainability of community sports groups who are creating positive change for young people across the UK.

In 2020/21 our priority was to support and strengthen the community groups in our network, through a more personalised experience



1,478

Community groups have benefitted from free services offered through their Sported membership

175



Grants were distributed to groups



We have supported **89%** of our groups (an increase of 19% on 2019/20)



64%

Groups in our network were satisfied with the services offered

To measure our impact in building our groups' organisational capacity, we use our unique **Capacity Measurement Tool**.

Tested over many years, our tool tracks the progress community groups are making in each of the key areas we believe they need to consider, for long-term sustainability. Our model identifies 5 areas of sustainability:



91%

of groups who received long-term support from us improved their capacity.

What the groups in our network have said...



If we hadn't had Sported's help in the last 18 months we wouldn't be here today, most definitely."



The support has been non-stop, much better than other statutory organisations. I find Sported much more relevant, and they really listen to grassroots organisations."



You're amazing, you deliver what you say...the help, the support, it's tailored to your needs"



I met Rehana (Sported's England National Manager) ...after I met her, she brought this optimism...she lit my optimism again...and yes, from that point every bit of help she's given I've jumped at...and it's worked brilliantly for us'."

Insight work

During this year it has been more important than ever to listen to the groups in our network; to discover **what they needed most**, decide the best ways in which we could **support** them and **learn** from their on-the-ground experience.

We are proud of the research we have released this year on important issues such as racism, funding structures, and Covid-19. We've used our research to **shape** our ongoing and future delivery.

TACKLING RACISM AT THE GRASSROOTS (October 2020)

Our aim was to understand the experiences of racism within the community sport sector; we sought insight directly from the groups within our network.

- Key themes drawn out included;
- Systemic racism
- Current approaches to tackling racism
- The BLM agenda
- Representation in sport
- Funding

Read the TACKLING RACISM report here




DOES GRANT FUNDING EXCLUDE THOSE IT'S DESIGNED TO HELP? (January 2021)

We explored the hypothesis that grant funding is designed in such a way that it excludes the groups it is aimed at. The focus was on grant funding for reducing inequalities for 'less well off' participants and Black, Asian and minority ethnic participants.

We were able to provide recommendations to funders to support funding applications from these groups.

Read the GRANT FUNDING report here




SURVIVING A PANDEMIC: COMMUNITY SPORTS GROUPS AND Covid-19 (March 2021)

Over 900 survey responses were received and focus groups with 18 community sports groups were held, as we attempted to understand the impact of Covid-19 on community sports groups.

We called for more support for community sports groups as they face new challenges surrounding financial support, re-engaging their participants and support with mental health for group leaders and young people.

Read the SURVIVING A PANDEMIC report here



Partnerships are key to creating greater impact through community sports

At Spotted, we leverage our networks, insight and experience by partnering with organisations to strengthen community groups and create opportunities for some of the most marginalised and hard-to-reach young people in the UK.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS THIS YEAR HAVE INCLUDED:



So what?

We provided 10 groups with 1:1 support from Spotted volunteers, with 8 developing their Theory of Change frameworks.



Girls unite

We increased sustained participation in physical activity of over 4500 women and girls by reducing barriers to participation in 380 groups across the UK.



Scottish FA

We supported 30 grassroots football teams through our Capacity Measurement Tool to show increases in community engagement.



Steve Morgan

We built the capacity of 73 groups in Wales to support their sustainability and built our volunteer workforce in Wales.



Satellite clubs

We offered light-touch volunteer support to 32 groups increasing their knowledge of sustainability planning and increasing their chances of survival.



Barclays

We distributed Barclays funding to grassroots clubs delivering football activities, enabling them to survive the Covid-19 pandemic.



Example project: Ensuring survival

Objective: To provide support during Covid-19, to ensure the survival of our grassroots community clubs

WHAT WE DID

282 groups were offered support as part of the delivery of this project; 259 placements were delivered by volunteers and 158 by Sported staff across several areas including:

- Fundraising
- Financial Planning
- Governance
- Strategic & Business Planning
- Marketing &
- Impact Practice

OUR IMPACT

94% 

of groups have been awarded grant funding since working with a Sported volunteer

89% 

of groups believe the support increased their confidence around their continued existence and long-term sustainability

97% 

'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with knowledge and expertise of their Sported volunteer



"Our work with Sport England was initially focused on increasing participation; with the pandemic came a change in direction. The Sport England funding gave us the ability to support the community sports groups in our network through the toughest of times, and create strong resilient organisations that are able to provide activity for underserved communities. We thank Sport England for their flexibility during the pandemic."

Helen Clayton, Partnership Manager

“

We, as a club, had a road map of where we want to be in three years' time, the support from Sported has given us confidence to pursue our goal"

Southchurch Park, Bowls Club

“

The support has given us the confidence that we can survive this pandemic"

Oakdale House Trust

Over 53%
received fundraising support; reflecting the financial strain of the pandemic on groups.

Example project: Covid-19 response

Objective: To provide grant funding to support groups across the UK to get activities back up and running. In turn, this would protect the future of community groups and allow young people to return to these positive environments.

WHAT WE DID

- Groups received a £2000 grant to be spent on whatever was required to get activities back up and running for young people (11-25 years)
- Support was provided to navigate the various Covid-19 guidelines to ensure they could operate safely in the delivery of sport and activity
- Marketing and communications support was given to help groups promote themselves

OUR IMPACT



50
grants distributed



1,560
young people were able to positively participate



96%
of groups were able to use funds to get back to delivering activities in their community

Funded by



The money given to us by Simplyhealth has meant we could buy additional cleaning products and equipment needed to run the classes and also pay the coaches for the additional time they needed for cleaning."

Fromside Gymnastics Club



"This grant allowed us to react to the ever-changing situation. We were aware of the negative impacts that young people were facing and wanted to make sure that our programme continued in a safe manner so that young people could still feel part of the club and see their friends."

Swindon Shock Basketball



Example project: Nike Future Leaders

Objective: To provide opportunity for inspirational young leaders from ethnically diverse communities to develop and launch their own sport for change project in the community.

The **Nike Future Leaders programme** was designed to support, empower and enable the next generation of young leaders.

Inspirational individuals, who created and developed their own ideas for 'sport for change' community projects in the capital, were selected to benefit from a 12-month package of support, mentoring and personal development opportunities.

Covid impacted all aspects of delivery. Workshops and mentoring sessions were moved online, which not only affected attendance and engagement but

prevented the group from building organic, personal relationships with one another.

Participants were each experiencing their own individual tribulations throughout the year, including uncertainty around work and education, alienation, and of course, loss within their families and communities.

The programme has adapted to these challenges through regular, personal communication, flexibility around workshops and extending delivery past the planned conclusion.

12

inspirational leaders
(16-30) trained

12

workshop sessions
delivered, including a
workshop with Nike's
brand team



Funded by



“

Delivering the Nike Future Leaders project over the last 15 months has been hugely challenging and rewarding, with the pandemic disrupting much of the planned delivery. What stands out to me is the resilience shown by each of the participants involved in the programme and their continued desire to create lasting change in their communities. Working with and supporting these Future Leaders develop their plans for community sports projects has really highlighted the incredible impact and potential of young people living in London.”

Sanaa Qureshi, Project Manager

The Times & The Sunday Times Christmas appeal

£650k
donations

33
new groups joined our network

15%
increase in online following

We were absolutely thrilled to have been selected from a huge number of organisations as one of the three beneficiary charities for The Times and The Sunday Times Christmas Charity appeal.

The appeal has proven transformative for Sported, strengthening both our financial position and brand awareness through readers donations and public profile, and through ambassadors such as Eric Dier. The results have created a strong platform for 2021/22 at such a challenging time for our network.

What we will do

Sported's priority in utilising those funds is to ensure relevant, tailored, 1:1 support is available to our network, as they continue to respond and recover from the impact of the pandemic. More specifically, that will consist of:

Protecting
600
groups most vulnerable to closure

Launching a new mental health programme in response to the needs of our network

Recruiting
150
'at-risk' groups for sos support

Digital tycoon hails charity appeal and gives £300,000



With your help, grassroots clubs can give young people a sporting chance



Next steps

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been felt by everyone across the UK, but not in equal measure.

Our new, longer-term strategy, effective from April 2021, will see us rebuild and recover from Covid-19, supporting our groups and growing our network, with a focus on improving mental and physical health, tackling inequalities and connecting community sports groups.



The Clubhouse



Thank you

We are incredibly grateful to all of our donors for their generosity and support. Sadly, we are unable to list everyone, but we would like to thank the following for their grants or donations in 2020-21:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Sport England | Santander |
| Times Appeal | Champniss Foundation |
| Simplyhealth | Halifax Foundation for Northern Ireland |
| Rind Foundation | National Lottery Community Fund Scotland: Community Jobs Scotland |
| The Black Heart Foundation | Football Foundation |
| Greater London Authority | Scottish FA |
| CVC | Procter & Gamble |
| London Sport | Welsh Boxing |
| Nike | Clothworkers Foundation |
| City Bridge Trust | Creative Artists Agency |
| The National Lottery Community Fund | Manchester Football Association |
| London Marathon Charitable Trust | National Lottery Community Fund Scotland: Young Start |
| Wales Council for Voluntary Action | The Gerald and Gail Ronson Family Foundation |
| Garfield Weston | The Steve Morgan Foundation |
| Baillie Gifford | The Moulding Foundation |
| Moondance Foundation | |
| Barclays | |
| Sport Wales | |