

Community Facilities Report

Full Report

January 2022



sported.org.uk

Spoted would like to thank all the representatives from the Spoted membership who very kindly gave their time to this research project and shared their experiences and learning, it is very much appreciated.

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Executive Summary

Setting the scene

There is a growing recognition of the large network of trusted sports clubs, community organisations and charities who are using sport and physical activity as a tool to improve lives and strengthen communities. With more help and resources, they can make even more of a difference¹.

Sported is the UK's largest network of Sport for Development organisations supporting over 2,500 youth and community groups. Evidence shows that a growing challenge for the Sported network is securing stable, long-term, affordable access to facilities from which they can deliver their activities – 24% of groups report that they don't have access to appropriate facilities. This has been a perennial problem which appears to have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic – 68% of Sported groups responding to our Pulse Survey (October 2021) have found it harder to access facilities since the pandemic and 25% have found it much harder². Recent research by the Sport and Recreation Alliance provides important additional insight on this issue.³

Importantly, the recent House of Lords National Plan for Sport and Recreation Committee Report⁴ recommends the Government introduce a statutory requirement on local authorities to provide and maintain adequate facilities for sport and physical activity, backed up with adequate financial support from the Treasury; conduct an audit and develop a clear, fully costed national facilities strategy including pitches, leisure facilities, swimming pools, parks and other outdoor and indoor spaces; and help create and strengthen the links between schools, local clubs and communities.

Purpose of the research

Through our network, Sported has seen that sustainable access to local facilities by community groups enhances their ability to deliver regular, safe, impactful sessions to local people, providing greater opportunity to tackle prevailing inequalities.

The purpose of this research was to develop a better understanding, from the Sported network, of the challenges groups face and the solutions that they have found in this regard. This insight is seen as contributing to the broad discussion on access to

¹ Sport England Strategy - [Uniting the Movement | Sport England](#)

² [Community Pulse October 2021 Results | Sported](#)

³ [Sport and Recreation Alliance's \(2021\)](#)

⁴ House of Lords National Plan for Sport and Recreation Committee Report - [A national plan for sport, health and wellbeing \(parliament.uk\)](#)

community facilities as well as supporting Sported members with their own learning and improvement activities.

Research methodology

The research methodology included a short desk research exercise to understand what already exists in this context and 12 in-depth interviews with leaders of organisations in the Sported network. In choosing those featured, we sought to ensure that we gained insight across a range of community assets including owner or leased facilities, community spaces with a short-term lease, schools, leisure centres, parks and open spaces.

Key Findings

1. Confidence in organisational survival is high but access challenges persist

In October '21, 97% of groups had reopened and 68% were extremely confident their organisation will survive the next 6 months, but 43% of groups have found it harder and 25% much harder to find facilities following the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. The challenges and solutions relating to accessing and utilising facilities, and general organisational capacity are completely intertwined

Having strong support from volunteers provides the opportunity to better maximise the potential of a facility.

3. Undertaking due diligence and accessing support are critically important when considering taking on and utilising a facility

An area of support that could be expanded is formalised peer to peer support between groups who have been through similar journeys.

4. Access to school facilities is a particular issue

In many cases management of school facilities has been outsourced to independent companies who have increased the prices for community groups resulting in a financial barrier to access. Programmes to help schools open their facilities for community groups (such as [Open Doors](#)) have been successful.

5. When decisions regarding access to community facilities are financially based, it favours larger, more established organisations, and participants who are wealthier

Market intervention should be considered to ensure that facility owners consider social value as part of the access to facility decision making.

6. The extent to which organisations have control over their 'home' venue plays a key role in their preparedness, resilience and response

Groups are often unsure if or when they will have a booking, so planning for 'home' fixtures can be very difficult. Interventions that ensure providers don't favour longer term, block bookings, would give smaller organisations that achieve social outcomes an important advantage.

7. Policies that support the refurbishment of a relatively small facility are lacking compared to those that support a new build or a large facility

Groups point to the fact they can't get VAT reductions on refurbishments in the same way they would be able to with new builds.

8. Not owning the asset makes it harder to access grants and support

Group leaders highlight that they can't borrow against a facility and have had to use their own personal assets as equity to support facility and service development.

9. Grassroots sports groups report that funding attracts other funding

Groups find themselves either in a positive or negative funding spiral and recommend that interventions are needed to ensure that funding doesn't continue going to the same groups.

Setting the scene

There is a growing recognition of the large network of trusted sports clubs, community organisations and charities who are using sport and physical activity as a tool to improve lives and strengthen communities. With more support and resources, they can make even more of a difference.⁵ Investing in community sport and physical activity provides a good investment for individuals and society; the [Sport Industry Research Centre \(2020\)](#) identify this figure at £3.91 for every £1 spent. This return on investment (ROI) is likely to be greater for interventions that deliver in areas of high deprivation or for communities most in need.⁶

Maximising the value of community sport

Sported plays a significant role across the UK providing critically important support to a network of over 2,500 youth and community groups. Evidence shows that a growing challenge for the Sported network is securing stable, long-term, affordable access to facilities from which they can deliver their activities – 24% of groups report that they don't have access to appropriate facilities. This has been a perennial problem which appears to have been exacerbated by the covid pandemic – 68% of Sported groups responding to our Pulse Survey (October 2021) have found it harder to access facilities since the Covid-19 pandemic and 25% have found it much harder⁷.

This insight is echoed in the recent [Sport and Recreation Alliance's \(2021\)](#) report evaluating organisational preparedness in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Lack of access to leisure centres and schools were key themes. The report also outlines how the extent to which organisations have control over their 'home' venue plays a key role on their preparedness, resilience and response. Furthermore, asset-owning providers suffered significantly as they continued to incur maintenance cost whilst their supply of income was cut off; they saw the biggest average financial loss. Providers who rent facilities were more able to pause and restrict their financial outgoings as their income supply was cut off, and those who make use of public space suffered even less disruption. In terms of reopening, asset-owning providers are less affected by external factors, whereas providers who rent facilities now find themselves dependent on the response of third parties, typically schools, leisure centres, community halls or more specialised facilities.

⁵ Sport England Strategy

⁶ [SFDC Spending Review Submission 2021.pdf \(sportfordevelopmentcoalition.org\)](#)

⁷ [Community Pulse October 2021 Results | Sported](#)

Importantly, the recent House of Lords National Plan for Sport and Recreation Committee Report⁸ recommends the Government introduce a statutory requirement on local authorities to provide and maintain adequate facilities for sport and physical activity, backed up with adequate financial support from the Treasury; conduct an audit and develop a clear, fully costed national facilities strategy including pitches, leisure facilities, swimming pools, parks and other outdoor and indoor spaces; and help create and strengthen the links between schools, local clubs and communities.

Purpose of the research

Through our network, Sported has seen that sustainable access to local facilities by community groups enhances their ability to deliver regular, safe, impactful sessions to local people, providing greater opportunity to tackle prevailing inequalities.

The purpose of this research was to develop a greater understanding, from the Sported network, of the challenges groups face and the solutions that they have found in this regard. This insight is seen as contributing to the broad discussion on access to community facilities as well as supporting Sported members with their own learning and improvement activities.

Research methodology

The research methodology included a short desk research exercise to capture an understanding of what already exists in this context and 12 in-depth interviews with leaders of organisations in the Sported network. In choosing those featured, we sought to ensure that we gained insight across a range of community assets including owner or leased facilities, community spaces with a short-term lease, schools, leisure centres, parks and open spaces.

The remainder of this report presents the findings from the primary research. Findings that are relevant to all the members are presented first and then findings for members in specific facility contexts follow, those that: own their building or operate under a long-term lease; operate from a community space with a short-term lease; or need to access school and/or leisure facilities.

⁸ House of Lords National Plan for Sport and Recreation Committee Report - [A national plan for sport, health and wellbeing \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/publications/2021/11/a-national-plan-for-sport-health-and-wellbeing)

Research Findings

Key findings for all facilities

The challenges and solutions relating to accessing and utilising facilities, and general organisational capacity are completely intertwined.

Many issues raised by interviewees are barriers and threats that affect Sport for

Development organisations in general and may not appear directly related to facilities. However, it's clear that access to facilities and general organisational capacity are completely intertwined. A well-run Sport for Development organisation is better able to access facilities and one that has sustainable and appropriate access to facilities is better able to run a Sport for Development organisation effectively.



Having strong support from volunteers provides the opportunity to better maximise the potential of a facility."

When decisions regarding access to community facilities are financially based, it favours larger, more established organisations, and participants who are wealthier.

This practice limits the development of smaller clubs, those who deliver minority sports or those who deliver to specific audiences. There are additional benefits when facilities are allocated to those who deliver additional social change in addition to a focus on sport. Market intervention should be considered to ensure that facility owners consider social value as part of the access to facility decision making.

The whole sports sector is linked, but a 'whole systems' approach must be scaled where appropriate.

When there are largescale shifts at the top end (for example a national or local team performs well, or a national campaign runs to encourage a certain sport or activity) people are inspired but there needs to be accessible options at grassroots level for people to see this through. Where there are blanket regulations that come through governing bodies and national sports bodies, it should be considered that these have a tiered approach.



The recent success of the England Netball team has generated lots of extra demand locally that we have struggled to meet."



We had to rebuild our throwing cage for field events to adhere to the new international safety regulations, even though they will never host international competitions or host competitors that can throw record level for whom the safety regulations are appropriate."

Grassroots sports groups report that funding attracts other funding.

Groups find themselves either in a positive spiral or a negative one. Interventions are needed to ensure that funding doesn't continue going to the same groups, and once funding is allocated that the ability of the group to self-fund and be sustainable is enhanced. This needs to work alongside grantees having a focused strategy for grant funding, aiming to reduce the need to go for the same grant funding in a few years' time.

Volunteers are vital in the running of Sport for Development organisations.

In talking about facilities, interviewees highlight the problems of over reliance on the good will of one or two key people. Having an army of dedicated volunteers spreads the load and enables groups to get more done. However, since Covid-19 sports volunteers have re-assessed the value of their time (e.g. prefer spending time with family, decide it's not worth the risk) and groups are struggling to build back this volunteer workforce. Asset owning groups highlight the benefit of multi-skilled volunteers who are flexible and willing to do multiple roles.



Having more volunteers means an additional person with a set of keys, enabling the facility to open and run session more nights of the week."



The support of multiple volunteers can be the difference between taking on a new asset of having it sit derelict"

Establishing good governance and effective business practices lays a strong foundation for success.

Having a good business plan attracts funding and other support, which in turn can make facility access easier. Groups highlighted the importance of setting up with the right governance (charity, CIO, CIC etc.) as this enabled them to access the most appropriate benefits, such as Gift Aid, or business rate relief. Again, completely intertwined with general Sport for Development good practice, multiple groups refer to having the right things set up to start with making their facilities journey easier.

Undertaking due diligence and accessing support are critically important when considering taking on and utilising a facility.

It's not easy for a group to know what or how is the right way to set up. Interviewees highlighted that accessing support saves lots of time and energy. Success factors included support that complements and works alongside funding (rather than distributed independently) and having someone who held them accountable and having continued access to advice after initial support. An area that could be expanded is formalised peer to peer support between groups who have been through similar journeys.



You've got to consider whether it's too much to take on, sometimes a building or facility really has done it this time."

Being connected to the local community generates important benefits.

Sport for Development organisations are generally localised, attracting participants from the local community. Additional benefits to participants are also benefits to the local community and increasing the understanding of this, amongst local businesses, has enabled groups to access or enhance their facility. For example, a football club aiming to access facilities approached a facilities manager who was from the local area. When the additional benefits were explained the facilities manager understood the impact to the community and enabled the club to hire at a reduced rate.



We asked the contracted building company if they wanted to sponsor the flatscreen TV in the reception area. They said yes, there's a little plaque – they get free marketing and we get a TV so it's win-win."

A focus on owning or operating under a long-term lease

Our contributing Sported members

The following Sported members took part in the research providing insight into owning a facility or operating under a long-term lease:

A Community Partnership, established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in 2014, to specifically take on the running of a local swimming pool from the Council after it came under significant risk of closure.

An organisation founded in 1948 that secured ownership of its current facility in 1973. The facility houses a sports hall, gym, three dance studios, ten classrooms, a community garden, canteen, and a number of offices.

A provider of high-quality gymnastics training to all ages and abilities in a fun and safe environment. Having been made 'homeless' from the property that they leased, the Club secured a mortgage to buy the freehold of the facility from which they currently now operate.

A voluntary run athletics club that caters for athletes of all ages, development and abilities. The Club took on a lease from the Council providing them with grounds that cover five to six hectares, a stand and a grassy area around the track.

An amateur boxing club that has evolved into an organisation that now provides a holistic approach to improving all round health and wellbeing and supports community cohesion. An asset transfer from the local council resulted in the organisation taking on a long-term lease for the facility which needed significant investment to make it fit for purpose.

Key findings

Taking on an asset

When taking on an asset (quite often from the council) it was clear that maintenance had been neglected over a significant period and necessary maintenance was long-overdue. In addition, financial accounts provided as part of the transfer process proved to be inaccurate. Due to the lack of maintenance, the buildings that are taken over tend to be old and with very bad insulation, meaning heating costs are very expensive. Asset transfer programmes need to ensure that accounts are accurate, and that support is available to

improve energy efficiency of buildings. Groups highlighted the need to carefully consider all aspects of taking on an asset, and to not just assume it will be worthwhile (sometimes a building really is too far gone to be restored). There is also a trade-off between continuing delivery immediately and keeping any existing participant base before they might move on, and pausing to get things in order, but risk losing any existing participant base. Success factors groups pointed to were getting 'sweat equity' from parents, for example to redecorate, as this spreads the load and meant parents developed a sense of ownership.



"It's all about the trade-offs when you take on a facility. On the one hand it's good to have some breathing space and make sure you've got everything in order. On the other hand, it's good to continue immediately so you inherit rather than lose previous users."

Understanding the market

Groups pointed to the importance of undertaking market research to inform the best use of the building. Importantly, it was highlighted that the development of a deeper understanding of other local services ensured that members didn't duplicate provision. The level of investment in the research needs to be commensurate with the size of the facility undertaking.



We certainly benefitted from visiting other venues for inspiration and learning."

Managing an asset

Funders want to fund direct delivery or a specific new development. However, for asset owning groups a large cost is overheads and it's difficult to get funding for these core costs (utilities, insurance, waste management, security etc.) Policies that support the refurbishment of a relatively small facility (the type used by Sport for Development organisations) are lacking compared to those that support a new build or a large facility. Groups point to the fact they can't get VAT reductions on refurbishments in the way they would be able to with new builds. There's buy-in from small businesses and local trades people, and they would like to give in-kind support, but they can't afford to do this in the way that larger companies can give through their Corporate Social Responsibility. Key enablers mentioned were mortgage holidays during Covid-19 and being able to re-mortgage.



Ownership requires having a constant eye on the need for modernisation of the facility and the requirement for financial resource to instigate facility improvements."

Current Threats

- **Getting enough coaches** to run as many classes as demand requires. Coach education suffered through Covid, so the next cohort of coaches aren't coming through naturally.
- **Building back volunteers** after Covid. People have discovered they quite like having their own time back, or there are other priorities in their lives.
- **Facilities still remain under threat of closure** and this is a particular issue for single sport organisations where running costs are high and there is an over reliance on the National Governing Body as a revenue stream.

Key Enablers

- Undertake detailed, **independent, consultation** on the best use of the building.
- A **focused strategy for income generation**. Organisations need to dispense with a 'scatter gun' approach and develop a more targeted approach that is needs led and is aligned to strategic objectives.
- Getting **reduced business rates**.
- **Setting up with the right governance**. This enables the group to access the most appropriate benefits, in terms of tax relief etc.
- **Being able to re-mortgage**. This enables groups to release capital for investments and build up reserves.
- **Building partnerships and accessing support**.
- **Funding**, such as from Sport England, National Lottery Recovery Fund

Community Spaces and **short-term lease**

Our contributing Sported members

The following Sported members took part in the research providing insight into utilising community spaces and/or operating under a short-term lease.

An organisation that offers a wide range of courses and sessions in dance, performing arts and sport. Set up in 2005, the parent organisation recently established a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC) which took on the responsibility of a community-based venue from the local Council.

A provider of informal education, skills training and recreational activities aimed at raising the aspirations of young people living in an inner-city area. The building that they operate from, secure yard and garden are rented on a lease from the Church across the road. The building itself is old, which requires a significant proportion of resources to be spent on heating.

A not-for profit charity specifically established in 2011 to take on the management of a Community Hub from the local Council on a leased basis. The organisation pays no rent to the Council, but receives no funding, therefore is required to generate revenue through various income streams.

Key Findings

Access to finance

There are barriers to accessing finance for members that don't own their property. Members are unable to borrow against a leased facility. This in turn means it is harder to access grants and support. Other anecdotal research by Sported indicates that for some group leaders the only option was to use their own personal assets as equity.



Having a commercial arm that can subsidise our work with young people has been very beneficial.”

Understanding the market

Points raised regarding undertaking market research for members who are taking on ownership of a property or are taking on a long-term lease are equally, and potentially

more relevant for organisations that are operating community spaces, as these spaces could have multiple different potential uses.



At first there was a bit of negotiation about the lease, and each party's expectation of what the space could or should be. We have come to a good understanding now and it's a space that is welcoming for all."

Managing a community space

As well as getting 'sweat equity' from parents, community spaces benefited from creating good links between all the different groups who use the space, creating a partnership model where each partner and user of the building offers and delivers something within their expertise. Success factors include creating work experience opportunities for young people, for example through the Kickstart program, or by institutionalising a volunteer programme, where young people get experience in a discipline in which they would like to find paid employment.



Rather than being just a landlord, we have created an environment where multiple organisations work together to achieve the same social outcomes. We recognise that each organisation brings different expertise and different perspectives."



We're just setting up our third social media volunteer, but that's great – it means each of them have moved on and got a job in that area."

Barriers

- Things happened slowly with our local council. [Getting the lease sorted](#) was longer and more complicated than it needed to be
- Not owning the property means organisations [can't borrow](#) against it and it's harder to access grants, especially as the lease period comes to an end
- Expensive [heating costs](#) and not being able to [make investments](#) to remedy the fact, such as better insulation or properly fixing the roof, is an issue for the organisations, as well as having a knock-on effect on the environment. The challenge of investing in the facility is further exacerbated by the fact that [small businesses can't benefit from CSR](#) to the same extent as larger companies, and it isn't possible to [get VAT on refurbishments](#) in the same way as is possible for new builds.

- **Income generation** - many tenants were lost due to Covid-19. Companies reassessed their need for office space, and all those renting the space for sports stopped
- Getting **funding for core costs**. Funders want to fund direct delivery or a specific new development, but a large cost is overheads (utilities, insurance, waste management, security etc.) which is harder to get funding for

Key enablers

- **Funding** to develop facilities so they are more attractive to those renting them
- **Volunteers that take ownership** and lead on different areas. Lots of people are willing to help here and there but having someone lead an area and make it happen is what makes the difference
- The **kickstart programme** provides government funding to enable organisations to employ young people to undertake a six-month job placement, benefitting both the organisation and the young person
- **Effective use of social media** to establish a positive profile and presence with the target audience
- **Embracing a partnership approach** creating good links between all the different groups who use the space. This recognises that each partner offers and delivers different things and that no one organisation has the solution
- **Institutionalising a volunteer programme**, where young people get experience in an area, and then have experience to find employment in that area

A focus on accessing **Leisure Facilities and Schools**

Our contributing Sported members

The following Sported members took part in the research providing insight into accessing leisure facilities and schools.

A Community Interest Company which uses football and futsal to improve educational outcomes of students in an area within a large City. Football is used as an incentive and a reward for students to dedicate themselves to their education. The Charity faces the challenge of trying to access artificial, full size 3G pitches, of which there are few available in their locality.

An Urban Soccer not-for-profit social enterprise that delivers a range of targeted Street Soccer and Urban Sports programmes to socially disadvantaged young people. Much of what they deliver in the summer utilises outdoor spaces, but during the winter they need to access indoor facilities and artificial pitches.

An organisation that was set up to combat a lack of quality football coaching for young people. Their success has driven up player and parent demand resulting in an increase in revenue from paid sessions.

A netball club that delivers much more than netball. Their sessions also cover injury prevention, diet and hydration, menstruation, coping with anxiety, and they run a breakfast club. The Club is very well known in its locality for having strong connections with schools, young people and parents.

Key Findings

Availability of facilities

For many groups the school and leisure facilities that they would like to access (often good quality 3g pitches, or indoor facilities in the winter) are not easily available. With social distancing rules, additional cleaning and one-way requirements, aimed at reducing the spread of Covid-19, many facilities have closed to outside groups and haven't been quick to reopen. Those that are open have increased prices to venues or the requirements of reduced numbers of people in a certain space means that it isn't financially viable to rent a venue to deliver to half the number of participants.



Restricted access to facilities means it's impossible for grassroots sports to deliver what they are capable of."



Just take what you can get. At the end of the day, it's better for them to play than not play."

Allocation of facilities

All groups point to the fact it's extremely hard to contact the right people at school and leisure facilities. Developing good relationships with the right people has been beneficial, once they were able to get hold of them. Even when they manage to contact the right person, and facilities are available, the allocation of facilities doesn't reflect the most efficient use in terms of gaining social benefit. Decisions are financially driven, which ends up favouring larger and more established groups. This means that small organisations are less able to develop and create more opportunities for young people because the larger clubs are favoured by facility providers.



For example, a booking of two hours a week will get trumped by a booking of four hours a night for three nights a week."



It takes a lot of effort to find places and secure bookings, and this is particularly difficult as a volunteer doing this on top of a full-time job."



In the end, we had to physically go to the venue to identify the right person to speak to. It's a shame that this what it takes, but it does help."

Uncertainty

Facilities favour longer term and block bookings (it makes their life easier) so groups have a constant fear that if they pause a booking, for example over the summer or just to have break, it will get taken by another group and they'll never get it back again. Groups are often unsure if or when they will have a booking, so planning for 'home' fixtures can be very difficult. Interventions that ensure providers don't favour longer term, block bookings, would give smaller organisations that achieve important social outcomes an important advantage.



Be persistent and stay positive."



I just want it to be fair, I feel for the kids. It's heart-breaking having to say "I'm sorry, it's not happening."

Outsourcing to independent companies

In many cases, management of school facilities has been outsourced to independent companies who have increased the prices for community groups. Programmes to help schools open their facilities for community groups (such as Open Doors) have been successful.



If the school understands what the organisation is trying to achieve for young people, they tend to be more flexible with bookings.”

Current Barriers

- **Pricing** is a significant barrier. Multiple venues have increased their prices. There is a particular issue close to Central London because there are more people with greater levels of disposal income that drives up prices. School facilities are increasingly being managed by private companies, which need to make money.
- **Connecting with the right people** at leisure facilities, especially as staff were furloughed, has proven to be very difficult.
- **Uncertainty over venues and bookings.** There's a constant fear that if you don't book an indoor space for the whole year you'll lose it next winter, or if you suspend your booking for a short period you'll never get it back again. For groups who have teams with competitive fixtures, the uncertainty around venues and bookings for home games means it is difficult to get commitment from players.
- **Relying on individual relationships** too much. Although finding the right person is key, these relationships need to go beyond individuals as when a person leaves a position it can end a good partnership.
- **Getting enough coaches.** After courses paused during Covid-19 the next influx of qualified coaches isn't coming through.

Key Enablers

- Having the **right governance** is key. Becoming a Community Interest Company (CIC) resulted in more beneficial discussions with the council.
- Being able to **demonstrate what is achieved** through the group's work. This meant sharing annual accounts, demonstrating who participants were and why they couldn't afford it themselves (e.g. asylum seekers), and demonstrating the educational outcomes achieved.

- [Develop positive relationships with leisure facilities and schools](#). This isn't always straight forward, it takes time and energy and can feel a bit desperate but it's worth it. For one member, the council offered reduced prices at certain locations and this was really appreciated. [Funding](#) and specific programmes like those from the Football Foundation which have requirements for community usage. However, these arrangements expire.
- Having someone who holds you [accountable](#) and who checks in regularly to ensure you are doing your part helps to make things happen.

Recommendations

Recommendations to stakeholders

- Support organisations who own or long-lease their facility to make them more energy efficient.
- When there are programmes with requirements for community usage make sure these aren't just at undesirable times, and that there's an element of sustainability when programmes end.
- Have a fair and transparent system that enables smaller organisations to secure bookings as easily as larger organisations can. The system should consider what is being delivered and to what audiences, rather than purely financial.
- Ensure that schools are encouraged and supported to open their facilities for community groups, building on the success of initiatives such as Open Doors.
- Create more opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.
- Advertise support more publicly; support available isn't well known on the ground.

Tips to other organisations

Tips to those who own / lease

- Taking on a large facility is not a decision to take lightly. Make sure there is full consideration of what is involved.
- You need lots of people power and it takes a lot of co-ordination as there's many different moving parts.
- Make sure you've got a long-term plan.
- Even without the funding for detailed consultation, at least do some market research, have a clear picture of what else is on offer and ensure you don't duplicate.
- Go and visit other places, speak to a manager and ask questions. They'll want to share what they've learnt.

Tips to those who are trying to access

- Be persistent and stay positive.
- Use anything you can to make connections.
- Physically go to the venue until you can speak to the right person.
- Just take what you can get. At the end of the day, it's better for them to play than not play.

Tips that apply to both

- Embrace support that you get and give it 100%.
- Maximise engagement with users, especially parents, and allow the space or the activities to be run by the people who use it, through forums and voting, rather than trustees making all decisions.
- Don't be afraid to ask for in-kind support and never say no to support, everybody has something to offer. Particularly from local businesses, it is in their interest for there to be positive opportunities for young people.
- Use as many different funding channels as you can. Spreading income means you are not dependant on one source. Try to find longer-term commitments.
- Maximise free resources like use of Gift Aid.

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