

# Sported's Impact

April 2021 – March 2022



# Introduction

Persistent inequalities continue to limit young people's opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity in the UK. These have been exacerbated in the past year by the difficulties of post-Covid recovery and an emerging cost-of-living crisis disproportionately affecting those in more disadvantaged communities.

As the UK's largest network of community sports groups (otherwise known as Spoted members), Spoted has provided critical support to ensure groups survive these major challenges to provide a lifeline to disadvantaged young people. Embarking on the first year of our new four-year strategy – **Reach. Include. Empower** – we've provided free-of-charge expertise, resources, and professional support to:

- strengthen local workforces
- build community groups' resilience
- improve wellbeing
- tackle inequalities
- connect communities

This Impact Report explores the results of this work over the financial year 2021-2022, highlighting the programmes, partnerships, media engagement, insight, and advocacy that helped community sports groups survive and their young people thrive.



## Reach

We support nearly 3,000 grassroots groups around the UK, many of which operate in the most deprived areas of the country. This section outlines the extent of our work – who we are, what we offer, and how groups have connected with us this year.

## Who we are

### Our vision

We want every young person to have the same opportunity to fulfil their potential.

### Our mission

We support community groups to survive so that they can help young people thrive.

### How we do this

**For our network:** we build the resilience of community sports groups, and strengthen those leading and working with such groups.

**Through our network:** we design and deliver targeted programmes that help groups provide opportunities for young people to take part in sport and physical activity.

**2,920**  
members

Around  
**540,000**  
young people  
reached

**52%**  
of members are  
volunteer-led

**47%**  
of groups work  
in the most  
disadvantaged  
30% of the UK

# Supporting our members

## Member services

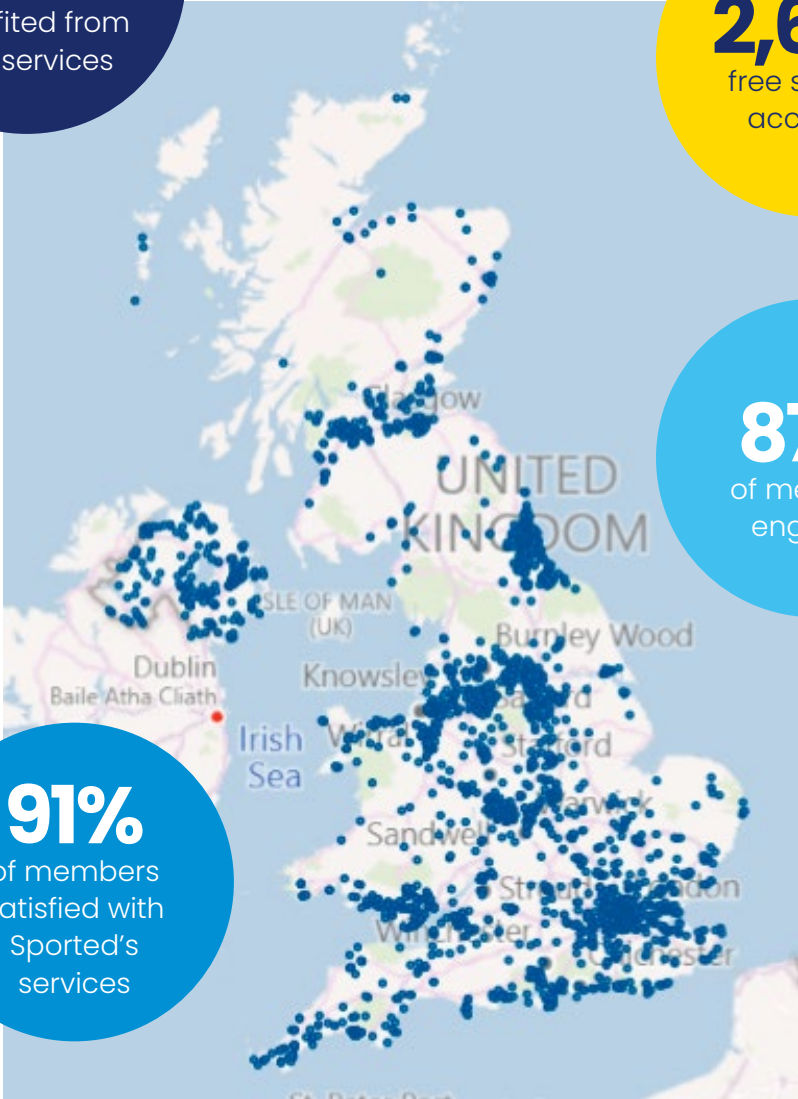
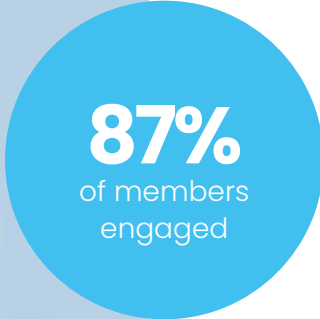
We've supported members across all four nations of the UK with free-of-charge services that have directly helped them to achieve a measurable difference to their organisation.

### For our members this support includes:

- Volunteer support
- Webinars
- Workshops
- Grant application support
- Project participation
- Member benefits
- Grant programmes
- Start-up support
- Staff support
- Bespoke funding search
- Resources/How to guides



"Just knowing that there is someone that I can turn to for support whose advice I trust, gives me the confidence to work through situations that I would have previously avoided." – Group Leader, The Cornwall Bicycle Project



## Volunteer support

At the heart of our people-led approach to supporting community sports groups is our network of 273 volunteers.

Located in every region of the UK, our volunteers have provided expertise and experience in key areas that support and empower our members and non-member organisations throughout the year.

They provide professional, skilled support to community groups on a long- or short-term basis, peer-to-peer support and knowledge-sharing, webinar facilitation, and support for Sported staff.

**116**

long-term support placements

**93%**

of our volunteers have provided support this year

**474**

total volunteer placements

**115**

Kickstart support placements



“This opportunity is invaluable and my meetings with Chrissy have given me some great food for thought, challenged me to think differently (in the best possible way) and helped provide a focus.” – Group Leader, Mini Mermaids



# Grant giving

We've helped our groups access a range of grants that provide much-needed financial support and assisted them at every step of the process. We've also expanded our engagement with funding partners who have increasingly asked us to help them reach grassroots organisations that can often be overlooked. We're grateful to our grant partners for their support.

## Supporting the grant journey

GRANT IDENTIFICATION

1

**£477,616**  
total funding

APPLICATION SUPPORT

2

**732**  
grants awarded

ONGOING SUPPORT

3

**56%**  
of funding to groups in most deprived third of the UK



"The grant from Sported means everything." – Group Leader



"This is a life-line for us and ensured we could restart face-to-face delivery of programmes at our largest centre." – Group Leader

CVC

*always*



ring

made by sport

## Getting funds to those in need

Our partnership with Sport England and their Tackling Inequalities Fund helped communities disproportionately affected by Covid-19 access much-needed financial support.

Our connections to under-represented groups meant that those most in need of support received grants from our £250,000 share of the fund.

It also transformed our relationships with Sport England and their systems partners: strengthening relationships, increasing collaboration, and resulting in connections with 91 of 121 Sport England systems partners.

**67**

members accessed grants

**100%**

of grants reached those in lower-socioeconomic groups

**62%**

of grants went to groups working with young people with disabilities

**£244,515**

funding awarded

**46%**

of grants went to groups working in ethnically diverse communities



“We know how many individuals stand to benefit from this contribution and the enjoyment they will gain & are extremely grateful for the opportunity this provides them to stay active.” - Wellbeing at Garon Park



# Place-based work in action

## THE WEST MIDLANDS

Our network of Regional Managers has enabled us to tailor support to meet specific local needs. They've connected with partners across their area, leveraging networks to create impact through and for organisations.

In the West Midlands, where Birmingham is preparing for the Commonwealth Games, our emphasis on collaborative action has developed and strengthened connections for local stakeholders tackling key issues facing communities in the region.

As a legacy project, Sported and Table Tennis England have been reaching young people from ethnic minority groups to engage in table tennis for the first time.



"The successes of this project have given us the confidence to work more collaboratively in the future." – Energize Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin

### Sustainability

Worked with 5 active partnerships to help local groups build sustainability.

### Funding

Supported and advised community foundations on funding and led Sported's TIF programme.

### Disability inclusion

Partnered with StreetGames and Access Sport to expand opportunities for disability inclusive sport.

### Collaboration

Worked alongside West Midlands National Funders, providing peer support and identifying themed areas for support.

### Legacy

Chairperson of Holford Drive Advisory Group providing support with local stakeholders, where they have secured a community legacy for the 2022 Commonwealth Games.



# Include

Reducing inequalities and promoting supportive, inclusive environments in which young people can participate in sport and physical activity, is at the heart of Sported's 2021-2025 strategy. This section explores how we've achieved this through our programmes around disability inclusion, women and girls, and EDI.

## Disability inclusion

We want to help groups already working with or focused on young disabled people to expand and deepen their work, and to support groups not yet inclusive to become more so.

In the past year we've delivered programmes focused on disability inclusion to:

- Increase participation of disabled young people
- increase awareness within Sported, our network, and the sector of disability inclusion
- increase confidence among group leaders about delivering inclusive sports



# Inclusive sport

Thanks to St James's Place Foundation, our Include project supported 15 groups in Dundee, Glasgow, and Northern Ireland to develop their capacity for inclusive sport. The Young Influencers programme has also engaged with 11 young people passionate about disability inclusion and prepared them to develop and deliver their own agenda for increasing inclusion and the voice of young people in their groups. We have 4 groups in Glasgow, 7 in Dundee and 4 groups in Northern Ireland.



ST. JAMES'S PLACE  
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



Increased connections between Young Influencers and other young people with disabilities in sport



Increased awareness of how to influence other young people to get involved in sport among Young Influencers



Supported group leaders through bespoke Disability Inclusion measurement tool and the creation of disability inclusion Action Plans



Last Saturday we hosted another Young Influencer session for #Project21 #Dundee delivered by @SSF\_2000. This session focussed on communication and how our YI can sell their story. We cannot wait to see how they put their new communication skills to the test, and sell their story!



The Young Influencers learned:

- ✓ There is a difference between push and pull influence
- ✓ People can influence in different ways depending on their skills
- ✓ Communication is key

They also learned that it's really difficult to build a couch out of balloons 🍷

#Project21



## Equal opportunities for women and girls

At Sported, we want every woman and girl to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential through sport and physical activity. We want women and girls to feel positive about getting and staying active, to be encouraged, motivated and excited to take part in sport and physical activity. Our 2021-2022 programme focused on women and girls sought to reduce gender inequalities and close the gender play gap.

### **This year we've:**

- Continued to support our network to be accessible to women and girls
- Delivered insight-led knowledge and education to groups on how to engage and retain girls in community sport
- Provided resources to groups through funded programmes to develop their inclusive activities



# Keeping girls active

Responding to research showing that one in three girls drop out of sports during puberty, Sported teamed up with Always to support the launch of their campaign to keep girls active and highlight the long-term benefits that girls get from participating in sport. Donations by Always through its Fuel Her Future and **Keep Her Playing** campaigns provided small grants and equipment packs to voluntary community groups across the UK.

Over  
**£140,000**  
 distributed  
 to groups

**40,824**  
 girls impacted by  
 the programme

**1000**  
 groups received  
 support

“It will make a big difference and enable extra sessions exclusively for our female boxers. The grant is invaluable to us.” – Saltash ABC

“The girls were grateful knowing they have free sanitary towels, and they can continue to dance without having to worry or stress about it.” – Theatre Peckham



# In development

As Sported moves into the second year of our four-year Reach. Include. Empower. strategy, we're continuing to build on our work supporting inclusion through programmes that tackle inequality, improve wellbeing, and connect communities.

In 2022-2023 these include:

**TAMHI Mental Wealth Games** – providing 50 licences to members across the UK to allow them to deliver fun, creative play activities that encourage engagement with mental health.

**Participatory grants programme** – a funding model that puts decision-making power about grants with the very communities impacted by fundraising decisions.

**Black Leaders Network** – mobilising Black Leaders from all nations and regions in the Sported network to influence change across the sporting sector for the benefit of the Black community.



## Empower

We help build organisational resilience and capacity to deliver activities. This section shows how we've empowered organisations over the last year through our capacity-building toolkit, and through programmes centred on mental health and connected communities.

### CAPACITY-BUILDING

Capacity-building support is at the heart of our mission to empower community groups. In the past year, we've renewed our focus on supporting members and non-member groups to develop their organisational capacity and sustainability. We help leaders assess, reflect, and (re)focus on the capacity-building needs of their group.



**78%**

of groups who received long-term support from us increased their organisational capacity



# Capacity-building with national governing bodies

We've engaged beyond our member network to support organisations across the UK, including national governing bodies, seeking to build the capacity and resilience of their groups.

## The Scottish Football Association (SFA)



As part of our successful partnership with the SFA, we offer a support package around impact and sustainability. We help to build the capacity of community football clubs in the bottom 20% most deprived areas of Scotland.

So far, through this 3-year programme, we have:

- Helped SFA to identify 30 potential clubs
- Supported 6 community football clubs to take part (each positively impacting on 50 or more young people's lives)
- Furnished 30 clubs with our Game Plan survey, helping us to ascertain which clubs need capacity building support with one of our business volunteers

Year three will result in the capacity of clubs being increased and the club leaders able to deliver/reach more disadvantaged young people and reach their aims.

## Welsh Boxing



Our work with the Welsh Amateur Boxing Association increased club resilience and connections between groups.

- 60 hours of Sported mentor support
- 120 groups offered Game Plan support
- 7 workshops/webinars on topics highlighted by groups



This has been a clear success for many of the clubs and as a consequence of this connection have increased sessions and members." – Owen Davis, Welsh Boxing

# Supporting mental health

Established following The Times & The Sunday Times Christmas Appeal 2020, our **Time in Mind project** empowered Sported members in developing mental health support within and for their organisations and communities.



Upskilled group leaders, coaches, and young people in knowledge and understanding of mental health.



Increased collaboration, expanded learning, and shared resources on mental health support through partnerships between groups and third-party service providers.



Informed a proposed model of good practice developed through project learning and shared with the wider community sport sector.

**Access and Awareness**  
Online resources to support groups

**Grants**  
£23,000 for groups to develop mental health support activities

**Time in Mind Report**  
Project learning informed a proposed model of good practice



The Time in Mind report reveal[s] the brilliant work done by the project groups and exploring key learnings that can – and we hope will – inform other models of mental health support among community groups in the future.” – Hayley Jarvis, Mind.



It’s giving them emotional therapy, comfort, confidence building, and looking at things from an alternative perspective as well.”– Group Leader



The young people are more aware of not only their own well-being but also their peers. It has a hundred percent raised the knowledge and understanding and signposting.” – Group Leader





# Connected Communities

Increasingly we are looking to support and empower groups in one location to work together alongside other stakeholders to tackle key local issues they identify together.

## This approach involves:



**Transitioning from a one-to-one to a one-to-many approach**



**Supporting groups to collaborate within their communities**



**Increasing groups' capacity and resilience**



**Solutions co-designed by the community and for the community**

## Lewisham, Waltham Forest, Ealing, Hartlepool and the Isle of Wight

### Outcomes for communities:

- Improved networks for and among groups
- Relationships built and strengthened
- Groups feel more heard and empowered
- Greater knowledge of local issues, key contacts, and possible solutions

### What's happened so far:

- Cluster group development and discussions for next steps
- A consultation with 226 children and young people across 8 groups in Hartlepool to identify barriers to participation
- Connections developed between stakeholders on the Isle of Wight



## Influence

At Sported we aim to be a trusted authority for grassroots sport and, through elevating the voice of our members, bring about effective change for our network and others dedicated to supporting community sport. This Influence section shows how our media engagement, insight, and advocacy work has explored and highlighted key issues facing community sport to wider audiences.

## MEDIA

Throughout the year we have generated media coverage to highlight some of the areas of work that Sported has driven or been involved with, including our partnerships and support from our Ambassadors, Eric Dier and Rory Best.

Securing media coverage enabled us to raise awareness of the issues our network faces and Sported's role in helping overcome them.



MEDIA CONT.

**Sporting glory on hold as clubs struggle to cash in on GB's Olympic success**

Funding, facilities and the lockdown hangover take toll on recruitment despite Tokyo uplift



Jonathan Brownlee, Alex Yee, Jess Learmonth and Georgia Taylor-Brown celebrate after winning the inaugural triathlon mixed team relay gold at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics in Odisha Marine Park. Photograph: Kacper Pempel/Reuters

Britain's sports clubs have been battered by the pandemic, but Alex Yee is hopeful that his two Olympic triathlon medals will help rekindle desire to take part in sport. "I've seen so many people saying that they want to be a triathlete, and they want to go to the Olympics now - that's amazing to see," he said. "And I guess now the issue is: where do they go?"

It's a good question. Many sports clubs are in a precarious position, including Crystal Palace Triathletes in south London, where Yee took up triathlon as a nine-year-old - the start of a career that has led to a gold medal in the mixed relay at the Tokyo 2020 games and silver in the men's event.

Wall-to-wall coverage of the Olympics usually translates into a huge boost for grassroots sports, as children inspired by their new athletic heroes take up sports. This time, however, the anticipated post-Olympics boost is taking time to filter through.

Crystal Palace Triathletes had 60 members in its juniors section before Covid.

- ▶ **Sporting glory on hold as clubs struggle to cash in on GB's Olympic success | Sport | The Guardian**

**Rugby legend Rory Best launches initiative for disabled young people in NI**



Rugby legend Rory Best has helped launch a new initiative for disabled young people in NI

SUZANNE MCCONAGLE  
04 February, 2022 01:00



Rory Best spend the morning with young people involved in the Panshannon Partners

IRELAND and Ulster rugby legend Rory Best has launched a new initiative for disabled young people in Northern Ireland.

The 'Include' project, which is run by the charity Sported, aims to see more young people with disabilities participating in sports in a bid to help them "increase self-confidence and feel less restricted in their aspirations".

Figures show that people with a disability in Northern Ireland exercise significantly less than those without a disability.

Around 19 per cent of people with disabilities participate regularly in physical activity, compared with 37 per cent of non-disabled adults.

The charity is supporting four groups in Northern Ireland to become more accessible for disabled young people and will be working in partnership with Disability Sports Northern Ireland (DSNI) to train, support and guide the groups and young people.

Among the aims of the project, funded by St James Places, are to provide training to group leaders and volunteers in relation to disability inclusion activities and provide leadership development opportunities for young people passionate about disability inclusion in their sports groups.

- ▶ **Rugby legend Rory Best launches initiative for disabled young people in NI - The Irish News**

**WSL: Barclays extends FA and Premier League partnership and will sponsor FA Women's Championship**

Barclays agree new sponsorship deals with FA and Premier League and will invest more than £30m into women's game over next three years; Barclays to become new headline sponsor of FA Women's Championship with sponsorship of FA Girls' Football School Partnership extended till next year

Wednesday 16 December 2021 12:27 UK



Emily Searns, director of the women's professional game at the FA says the new investment across the top tiers of the women's game is a measure of how far women's football has grown.

f t g+ in

Barclays is investing more than £30m into women's and girls' football over the next three years as part of an investment that will see them become headline sponsors of the FA Women's Championship.

The bank has agreed new sponsorship deals running to 2025 with the Football Association and the Premier League, with which it has been a partner for 20 years.

Trending  
Transfer Centre's List

- ▶ **WSL: Barclays extends FA and Premier League partnership and will sponsor FA Women's Championship | Football News | Sky Sports**

- ▶ **Women's football handed major boost as FA and Barclays sign £30million deal - Mirror Online**

**ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL ERIC DIER PRESENTED THE CHARLTON ATHLETIC COMMUNITY TRUST WITH A LONDON SPORT AWARD**

The showcase event once again recognized, celebrated, and shone a light on the stories of the incredible individuals, groups, and organisations for their outstanding work across the capital, helping Londoners of all ages and backgrounds to be physically active. Charlton's triumph was announced in a pre-recorded message from Tottenham and England ace Eric Dier.

Charlton Athletic Community Trust enjoyed a memorable Monday, after their pair of London Sport Award nominations resulted in England international Eric Dier presenting them with a major gong at the historic London Guildhall.

Having been nominated, but missing out on The Elite Sport in the Community Award, in association with the Mayor of London, the Trust took home The Young Londoners Award, in association with Sported, for the work it undertakes with children and young adults across south-east London and Kent.

One of the inspirational initiatives that Charlton run are The Upbeats, a team for those with Down's syndrome, which trains every Saturday.



PREMIER LEAGUE  
**SPURS' ERIC DIER SAYS ABUSE FROM SUPPORTERS MUST BE TAKEN MORE SERIOUSLY**

26/07/2020 AT 09:51



- ▶ **England international Eric Dier presented the Charlton Athletic Community Trust with a London Sport Award - Eurosport**

- ▶ **Rugby legend Rory Best joins charity, Sported, as ambassador | Trends and Features | Sports Insight (sports-insight.co.uk)**

# Insight and advocacy

It has never been more vital to listen to and elevate the voices of community sports groups. We have worked hard to find out about the challenges they face and their ambitions for the future. Our insight helped us better understand their needs and improve our service delivery.

It's also meant we can make their voices heard about, and advocate around, key issues: from access to facilities to mental health support, from barriers to outdoor activities to young people's priorities. You can read more about our research on our Insight page.

## Pulse

Building on our network-wide Pulse surveys, we continued to check in with our groups to find out about their sustainability, needs, and ambitions.

Based on 800 responses, our Pulse reports highlighted:

- mental health remained the most significant challenge facing young people in our groups' communities.
- as lockdown restrictions ended, the groups in our network expressed high levels of confidence in their organisational survival.
- participation levels have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Read the **October 2021** and **March 2022** Pulse reports

## Facilities

We sought to better understand the challenges groups face, and the solutions they have found, in ensuring sustainable access to local facilities for delivering their activities.

The report's recommendations included:

- interventions that ensure social value is a factor in decision-making about access.
- continued and expanded support for Open Doors programmes that help schools open their facilities for community groups.
- encouraging providers not to limit access to larger, wealthier groups who are able to guarantee long-term block bookings.

**[Read the Facilities report here](#)**

Our most  
viewed report  
of the year

## Wales Young People consultation

Engaging directly with young people in Wales, we aimed to find out more about what is important to them and establish how they can help shape the provision of sport and physical activity in their communities.

We found that:

- they value the feeling of family, community, and safety that their clubs can provide.
- they see their clubs as advocates for inclusivity, opportunities to take part on a level playing field, and safe spaces outside the home.
- mental health has become even more of an issue because of Covid-19 and lockdowns.

**[Read the Wales Young People consultation here](#)**

# Our partners

Spotted works closely with partner organisations across the UK to support and empower community sports groups. In 2021-2022, we've used our networks, insight, and experience to connect with a range of partners that allow us to deliver for and through member and non-member groups.

## Delivery partners

Through our work we have enjoyed working with those who have helped us deliver key expertise:



# Thank you

**Our work wouldn't be possible without the generosity of our donors and we're immensely grateful for all their support. Unfortunately we can't list everyone, but we'd like to thank the following for their grants or donations in 2021-2022:**

Baillie Gifford

Barclays

Champniss Foundation

City Bridge Trust

Creative Artists Agency

CVC

Football Foundation

Garfield Weston

Greater London Authority

Halifax Foundation for Northern Ireland

London Sport

Nissan

Made by Sport and Ring

Moondance Foundation

Osborne Clarke

Procter & Gamble

Rind Foundation

Santander

Scottish FA

Simplyhealth

Sport England

Sport Wales

St James' Place

Sure

The Dulverton Trust

The National Lottery Community Fund

The National Lottery Community Fund Scotland: Young Start

The National Lottery Heritage Fund

The Steve Morgan Foundation

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

With thanks to all other Sported donors for their generous support in the last year.

