

Ring believe that strong communities are key to happier and safer neighbourhoods, and in 2021 partnered with Made by Sport with the aim of shaping better futures for young people and Build Stronger Communities through sport. There were three pillars to the partnership; thought leadership through research, raising awareness of the impact sport for good can make, and direct impact through targeted project funding

In January 2022, Made by Sport commissioned research into the public perception of sport in our communities. We wanted to use this information to shape the Building Stronger Communities Fund, which was due to be launched in February 2022.

We wanted to know whether people think that sports initiatives build a sense of community, and if so, how. And taking this a step further, whether people believe that sport can play a wider social role in communities, in relation to achieving other social outcomes. We were also keen to understand how the pandemic had impacted sports clubs and community groups in terms of access to and interest in taking part in sport in their communities.

The survey showed us that only half of parents access sport for their children despite most of them recognising the amazing role it can play to combat mental health and crime, and to improve life skills, as well as to build communities.

Key Findings

1. Does sport build stronger communities?

- Three fifths of those surveyed associate a local sports team with the idea of community. This rises to 78% amongst those who take an interest in sport.
- When looking at where this type of sport takes place, 68% of adults associated community sport being played in a park or playground, over and above the 55% who made the association with a sports centre.
- **68% agree that sport can help build stronger communities.**

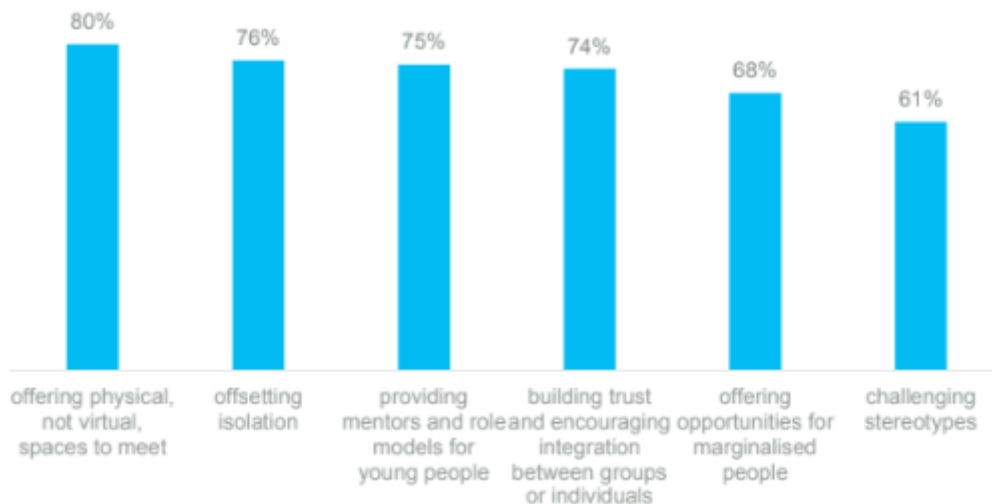
2. What is the purpose of sport in communities?

- 54% feel that 'community sport' is about talent pathways' – opportunities for people to progress to elite level sport through a local club.
- And 71% feel that 'community sport' is about participation-based sport and activity, for example a local football, rugby, or cricket club.
- **However, a significant 64% feel that 'community sport' is about sport that has a wider social purpose than participation, for example developing life skills or to address mental health.**

3. How does sport build communities?

- Over three quarters of UK parents are concerned about the likelihood of their child/children experiencing mental health issues and about their physical health and wellbeing. **80% believe that sport can have a positive impact on both physical and mental health.**
- Nealy three fifths of parents aged 25 – 55 are concerned about the risk of their child/children being involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. However, **67% of UK adults agree that sport can reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.**
- **And 75% also agree that sport can teach young people life skills which are useful for education and employment** (e.g., confidence, teamwork etc).
- Over half of parents (56%) are already aware that previous research has shown that there is a positive link between a child's participation in regular sports and developing the soft skills they need for future career opportunities.

4. Focussing on sports wider social purpose, what specific social outcomes can it achieve?



5. Why aren't more people accessing sport in communities, given that the benefits are widely recognised?

- There are not enough local sports clubs in my areas for my child/children to take part in - 52%
- My child/children aren't particularly sporty and so wouldn't be interested in sport as a hobby outside of school - 50%
- Sports is too expensive a hobby for my child/children to take part in - 46%
- Sports is too time consuming a hobby for my child/children to take part in – 38%