



# Understanding the Sport & Physical Activity Workforce

**An evaluation guide**

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# Who is this guide for?

**This guide is for organisations that recruit, develop and deploy a sport and physical activity workforce. We would encourage individuals within organisations who have a responsibility for the workforce to read this guide.**

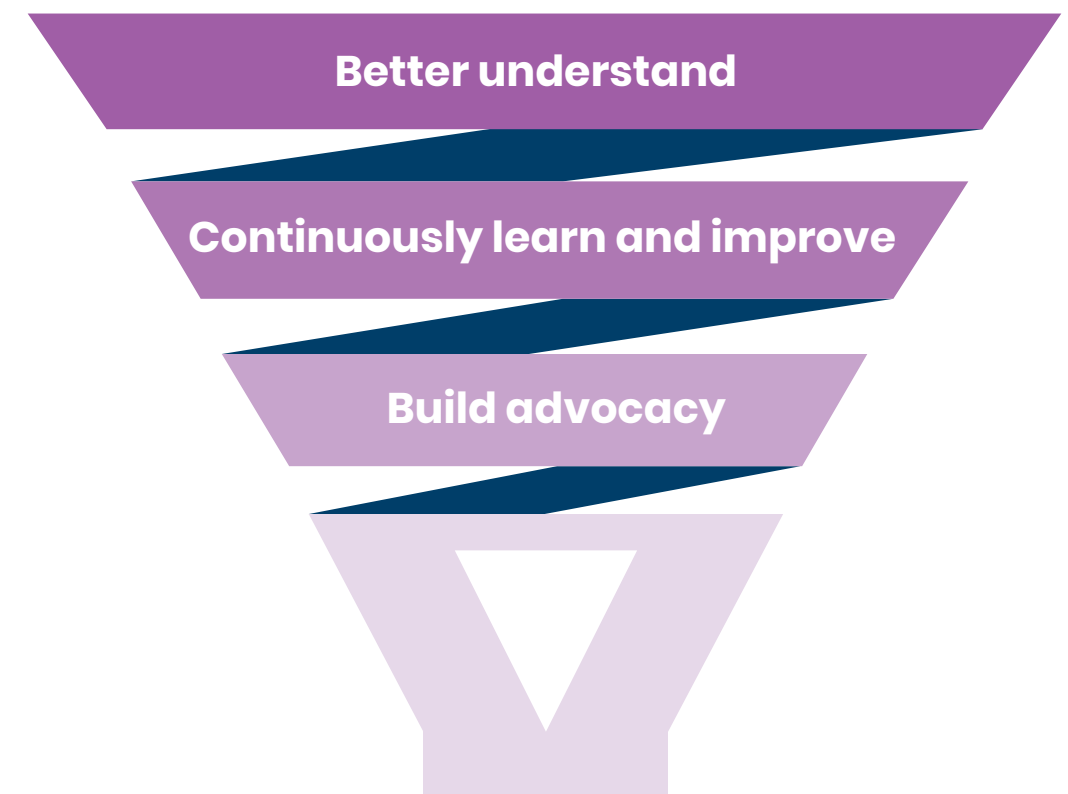
This may be individuals with an overarching role or a role that focuses on one aspect like coaching, volunteering or club and community development.



# How can this guide help you?

The guide aims to help organisations improve the understanding of their workforce, learn about areas relevant to their needs to inform future delivery and improvement and provide evidence to advocate for the role and value of the workforce in organisations and more widely in the sector.

We have developed the guidance so that it can be used by a diverse range of organisations and it can be used flexibly to focus on areas that organisations would find most useful.



**Improve the way in which we collectively measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the workforce**





## Why is it important to understand the workforce?

From coaches, volunteers and helpers to officials, administrators and paid employees, the sport and physical activity industry is built on inspirational people making the difference to the lives of others. The workforce plays a significant role in shaping the experience of the participant and can often determine whether an individual receives a positive or negative experience of sport and physical activity. Our objective is to support organisations to develop a diverse workforce that is highly skilled, motivated and valued, to ensure that everybody has the opportunity to have a good experience in our sector. This guide is part of our work with partners to gather further evidence and insight to support us to work towards achieving this objective.

The guide is aligned with the objectives in our [three people strategies](#); Volunteering in an Active Nation, Coaching in an Active Nation and Working in an Active Nation. Consultation with a number of internal colleagues and external partners highlighted an opportunity for us to improve the way we measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the workforce in the sector and to take a shared approach that could be used across the sector. This can enable useful comparisons between projects and initiatives and improve the collective

quality of the evidence – helping us all to demonstrate the value and impact of the workforce more effectively and identifying ways in which to improve our approach to delivery. For example, learning generated at scale will be used to make insight-driven, customer-focused decisions about workforce development.

We also want to build the evidence base to demonstrate how a diverse customer-focused workforce contributes to the government's five strategic outcomes.

### Sporting Futures: Government outcomes

Physical wellbeing

Mental wellbeing

Individual development

Social and community development

Economic development



# How to use this guide

**This guidance is underpinned by and focuses on two main strategic objectives;**

1. Create a more diverse and representative workforce
2. Develop a sector where workforce behaviour creates a positive experience for customers

This section sets out the various stages in understanding the workforce, accompanied by guidance to help you navigate each step. Remember, at each step of a project or programme you can get support from Sport England and your consultant, so please don't be afraid to ask.

This guidance will help organisations to understand what it is that they wish to learn from their projects and programmes in relation to these areas.

The guidance is intended to be used alongside other existing resources such as our [Evaluation Framework](#) and [Volunteering Evaluation Guidance](#). Organisations do not need to replace their existing approach with this one, instead we hope they can consider how it can complement what is already working and add value by suggesting what additional areas of focus or information could help to develop their understanding of the workforce they engage with. Please view a list of useful resources later in this document for further information.

This guidance is not intended to set out in detail what information an organisation should collect but it provides some suggested evaluation objectives, linked to our strategic objectives. This will help with planning where to focus your evaluation and gives some practical guidance to support implementation, including suggested information to collect and some example questions.



Other resources listed in this guide, like the Evaluation Framework and Volunteering Evaluation Guidance include question banks which include relevant questions that could be applied in the context of workforce evaluation. For example, organisations that are required to meet the Tier 3 Governance Code for Sport could use this guidance to inform the questions they ask within their professional workforce survey.

## Workforce principles

Each of the objectives are underpinned by workforce principles. These Workforce Principles have been developed by [UK Coaching](#) and are informed by insight gathered from a diverse range of their partners. In the context of this guide the principles have been used to show how the information you collect can be used to support several key areas of workforce development. You may not want to focus on all of the principles but we would expect to see connections between one or two principles and your projects and programmes.



# Evaluation objectives

Workforce principle	Objective 1 – Create a more diverse and representative workforce
Understand your workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capture demographic information on who your workforce is, (i.e. gender, age, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic group)</li><li>• Understand their motivations and lives (i.e. why do they work, coach, volunteer)</li></ul>
Getting the right people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capture information on how you recruited your workforce (i.e. what works and doesn't work in getting a diverse and representative workforce e.g. marketing channels, interviews)</li><li>• Track if different approaches work better for different groups (e.g. for younger people compared with older people)</li></ul>
Mobilising people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capture information on the knowledge, skills and behaviours being used by your workforce (i.e. does your workforce meet professional standards, have the capabilities to meet the needs of its audience)</li><li>• Track if skills and knowledge/qualifications differ amongst different groups</li></ul>
Looking after people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capture information on the satisfaction/experience that your workforce is having (i.e. are your workforce happy at work? Do they feel valued by their manager? Are they receiving training opportunities?)</li><li>• Track if satisfaction is different for different groups</li></ul>
Developing people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capture the support your workforce needs and any skill/knowledge gaps (i.e. behaviour change, use of technology, coaching skills)</li><li>• Find out to what extent the needs vary for different groups (e.g. mentoring, coach development, one-to-one support, specific role training)</li><li>• Track how the involvement of different groups varies over time (e.g. are some groups more/less likely to remain involved or progress in their roles?)</li></ul>

Workforce principle	Objective 2 – Create a sector where workforce behaviour creates a positive experience for customers
Understand your customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capture information on who your current and potential customers are (i.e. gender, age, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic group)</li><li>• Understand their motivations and lives (i.e. how do they feel about being active)</li></ul>
Getting the right people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore how representative the workforce is of the customers and/or target population</li><li>• Capture how a representative workforce impacts participant experience</li></ul>
Mobilising people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore how well the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the workforce are matched to the needs of the customers (i.e. do they have the knowledge, skills and behaviours to provide positive experiences?)</li></ul>
Looking after people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capture information on the satisfaction/experience that your customers are having, (i.e. are your workforce's customers having positive experiences?)</li><li>• Find out what the workforce can do to improve customers' experiences</li></ul>
Developing people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capture the support your workforce requires to better meet the needs of their customers (e.g. mentoring, coach development, one-to-one support, online training, formal learning)</li></ul>



# Evaluating the workforce

## Example questions

The approach you take to collect data is up to you and your organisation. However, below are a few example questions and practical tips to inform your thinking. We encourage you to also take a look at our evaluation framework to help you work out what approach is best for you.

Principle of workforce development	Objective 1 – Create a more diverse and representative workforce
<p><b>Understand your workforce</b></p> <p>Area of focus: Why do people lead or help to lead sessions?</p>	<p>*Did you start to lead or help lead sessions for any of the following reasons? (please select all that apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I wanted to improve things/help people</li> <li>• I wanted to meet people/make friends</li> <li>• The cause was really important to me</li> <li>• My friends/family did it</li> <li>• It was connected with the needs of my family/friends</li> <li>• I felt there was a need in my community</li> <li>• I thought it would give me a chance to learn new skills</li> <li>• I thought it would give me a chance to use my existing skills</li> <li>• It helps me get on in my career</li> <li>• It’s part of my religious belief to help people</li> <li>• It’s part of my philosophy of life to help people</li> <li>• It gave me a chance to get a recognised qualification</li> <li>• I had spare time to do it</li> <li>• I felt there was no one else to do it</li> <li>• I played/participated in the sport</li> <li>• My child played/participated in the sport</li> <li>• None of these</li> <li>• Other (please specify).</li> </ul>



<p><b>Getting the right people</b></p> <p>Area of focus: Recruiting the right workforce</p>	<p>*Who told you about the opportunity to take part in leading or helping to lead sessions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I searched for the opportunity myself</li> <li>• My teacher or youth worker told me about it</li> <li>• My employer told me about it</li> <li>• A friend or family member told me about it</li> <li>• Another volunteer approached me</li> <li>• A referral or recommendation (e.g. from a healthcare professional, social worker or community group)</li> <li>• Other (please specify).</li> </ul> <p>*Where did you find out about the opportunity to lead or help lead sessions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)</li> <li>• On a leaflet or poster</li> <li>• In a newspaper or magazine</li> <li>• On a website</li> <li>• At an event</li> <li>• Other (please specify).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mobilising people</b></p> <p>Area of focus: Understanding the delivery experience</p>	<p>* To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel able to deliver a good experience for those I seek to engage with</li> <li>• I feel well supported</li> </ul> <p>Definitely agree/Tend to agree/Tend to disagree/Definitely disagree</p>



<p><b>Looking after people</b></p> <p>Area of focus: Supporting and valuing the workforce</p>	<p>*Do you currently have access to someone who can support you in leading or helping to lead sessions? (i.e. a coach developer or a mentor who can help educate, support or teach you about coaching)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – I currently have someone supporting me</li> <li>• Yes – I have access to someone but they don't currently support me</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• Don't know.</li> </ul> <p>*Do you feel that you get enough recognition leading or helping to lead sessions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes/no/don't know.</li> </ul> <p>*To what extent do you agree or disagree that your volunteering experience is?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoyable</li> <li>• Rewarding</li> </ul> <p>Strongly agree/agree/neither agree or disagree/disagree/strongly disagree</p>
<p><b>Developing people</b></p> <p>Area of focus: Understanding the workforce experience</p>	<p>*Thinking about your experience of leading or helping to lead sessions, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I look forward to coaching</li> <li>• I feel that my coaching makes a difference to my participants</li> <li>• I am recognised for the contribution I make to helping others through coaching</li> <li>• It's hard to balance coaching alongside my other commitments (e.g. work, childcare)</li> <li>• I have the right resources or equipment to coach effectively</li> <li>• I would like some help from others when I coach (i.e. parents or other volunteers)</li> <li>• I would recommend coaching to a friend or colleague</li> <li>• I feel confident when delivering sport or physical activity sessions</li> <li>• I am able to coach to a standard I am pleased with.</li> </ul> <p>Strongly agree/tend to agree/neither agree nor disagree/tend to disagree/strongly disagree</p>

## Evaluating the workforce

### Example questions (continued)

<p><b>Developing people</b></p> <p>Area of focus: Training and Development</p>	<p>*Have you yourself received any training or induction at all for leading or helping to lead sessions? (Please include any initial training and any training at a later date.) Yes/no/was already trained</p> <p>*How adequate do you feel the training was that you received? Very adequate/fairly adequate/fairly inadequate/very inadequate</p> <p>*Now, thinking about any session you've led or helped to lead, what do you think makes a great sport or physical activity session? (You can tick up to five.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong participant enjoyment</li> <li>• The coaching received helps to improve participant physical health</li> <li>• The coaching meets individual sport and physical activity needs</li> <li>• The coaching helps to improve participant mental health and wellbeing</li> <li>• The coaching supports the participant to achieve their individual goals</li> <li>• The coaching helps to improve the participant's skills/performance</li> <li>• The coach listens to the participant</li> <li>• The participant has confidence and trust in the coach</li> <li>• The coaching motivates the participant to be better</li> <li>• The coach has a good relationship with the participant</li> <li>• The coach encourages the participant to come back</li> <li>• Through coaching, the participant feels part of a team or community</li> <li>• The coaching helps to improve participant fitness.</li> </ul>
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# Understanding the customer

## Example questions

Below are some example questions that you may find helpful in understanding the customer your workforce engages. We encourage that these example questions are to be collected from the customers, rather than the workforce.

Principle of workforce development	Objective 2 – create a sector where workforce behaviour creates a positive experience for customers
<p><b>Understand your customers</b></p> <p>Area of focus: Customer experience</p>	<p>*Thinking about the last time you attended a coach-led session, how would you rate your overall experience? (For people to answer who have been coached in the last year.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Range (1-10): 1 – Very poor / 10 – Very good</li> <li>Not Sure.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Getting the right people</b></p> <p>Area of focus: Understanding what personal characteristics customers value in someone who leads or helps lead a coached session.</p>	<p>*When choosing a coach, which of these do you think are the most important? (You can tick up to five.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualifications and training</li> <li>Is from a similar background to me</li> <li>Level of experience</li> <li>Has similar life experiences to me</li> <li>Personal and people skills</li> <li>Understands me and my specific needs</li> <li>Has similar values to me</li> <li>Has a good reputation in the community</li> <li>Has a similar personality to me</li> <li>Is a similar age to me</li> <li>Is the same gender as me</li> <li>None of these</li> <li>Other (please specify).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mobilising people</b></p> <p>Area of focus: Impact of workforce deployment on customer retention.</p>	<p>* How influential is the volunteer/coach/professional as to whether you come again?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completely/Somewhat influential/A little/Not at all</li> </ul> <p>* Does the volunteer/coach/professional meet your needs when taking part?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completely/Somewhat/A little/Not at All</li> </ul>



	<p>Now, thinking about any coach-led session you have participated in, what do you think makes a great sport or physical activity session? (You can tick up to five.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong participant enjoyment</li> <li>The coaching received helps to improve participant physical health</li> <li>The coaching meets individual sport and physical activity needs</li> <li>The coaching helps to improve participant mental health and wellbeing</li> <li>The coaching supports the participant to achieve their individual goals</li> <li>The coaching helps to improve the participant’s skills/performance</li> <li>The coach listens to the participant</li> <li>The participant has confidence and trust in the coach</li> <li>The coaching motivates the participant to be better</li> <li>The coach has a good relationship with the participant</li> <li>The coach encourages the participant to come back</li> <li>Through coaching, the participant feels part of a team or community</li> <li>The coaching helps to improve participant fitness</li> </ul> <p>*To what extent do you agree with the following statement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My sport and physical activity experience is enjoyable</li> <li>I would recommend it to a family member/friend</li> <li>My volunteer/coach/manager helps to make my experience enjoyable.</li> </ul> <p>Strongly agree/tend to agree/neither agree nor disagree/tend to disagree/strongly disagree.</p>
<p><b>Looking after people</b></p> <p>Area of focus: Customer perceptions of the coached experience</p>	

\*These questions are from the UK Coaching National Population Survey (2019) and the Sport England Volunteering Experience Survey (2019).



# Understanding the customer

## Example questions (continued)

### Developing people

Area of focus:  
The qualities of  
the workforce  
needed to create a  
positive customer  
experience

\*In your opinion, what do you think makes a great sport or physical activity coach? (You can tick up to five.)

They:

- Have previous experience of coaching
- Are friendly and approachable
- Are highly skilled in the sport/activity
- Build good relationships and rapport
- Are qualified
- Treat all participants as individuals
- Know the rules of the game
- Give constructive feedback and corrections
- Improve people's skills/ability
- Create a warm and welcoming environment
- Get good results (i.e. win matches/games)
- Maintain high levels of safety
- Are confident
- Listen to participants
- I'm not sure, I don't know anything/enough about coaching
- Other (please specify)

We would encourage you to consider adopting both qualitative (e.g. interviews and focus groups) and quantitative (e.g. surveys and questionnaires) methods to obtain richer data. Refer to our [Evaluation Framework](#) for further information.

Consider discussing any adopted approach with the insight and evaluation teams or leads in your organisation. They may be able to support you to implement some of the approaches in this guide and help you to gain wider buy-in and support. It can also help to identify opportunities to integrate some of the questions into existing surveys or evaluation.





# How this Guidance differs to the Sports Governance Code Tier 3 Professional Workforce Survey

Organisations who are required to meet Tier 3 of the *Sports Governance Code* are asked to complete an annual professional workforce survey. This guide can help to inform your professional workforce survey by providing some suggestions of questions to include, but it serves a different purpose. The table below aims to summarise the differences and provide clarity on how they can complement each other.

Workforce evaluation guidance	Governance code Tier 3 professional workforce survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims to support the entire sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims to understand the views of employed staff within Tier 3 organisations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be used as guidance to support projects, programmes and organisations at all levels from local to national</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims to support partners to meet a specific aspect of the Tier 3 Sports Governance Code</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An ever-present reference point to assist our understanding around how the sector recruits, looks after, mobilises and develops the workforce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A survey completed annually by Tier 3 organisations</li> </ul>



## Sharing your learning

This guide is here to help us gather further insight and evidence to inform how we work together towards our shared vision for a more representative workforce that can support us to deliver more positive experience in sport and physical activity for participants. Using this guidance and sharing your findings with us can help us to ensure that the learning can be shared and used to inform future decision making and delivery across the sector. As a more consistent approach to workforce evaluation becomes embedded within the sector we will collectively be better placed to influence decision making and delivery across our organisations, to improve the impact the workforce has on helping our nation become more active.

You can share your findings with us in a format that is most appropriate for you. This can be a summary of headline findings or it could be a more formal report or publication. We would

not expect you to share raw data or personal data with us. If you require further support regarding the use of this guide or in shaping your approach we would be happy to offer advice and guidance. Good Luck!

### Useful resources

- [Sport England Evaluation Framework](#)
- [Sport England Evaluation Framework Question Bank](#)
- [Sport England Research Guide](#)
- [Volunteering Evaluation Guidance](#)
- [Volunteering Survey](#)
- [UK Coaching Workforce Principles](#)

If you would like to ask us questions, share your results or receive support please contact us via:  
[workforce@sportengland.org](mailto:workforce@sportengland.org)



