SPORT ENGLAND

Moving Communities

Moving Communities Impact Report

April 2022 – March 2024

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Active Insight

Right Directions
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Foreword

People often cite public leisure centres as being vital community assets – they are not simply places for people to be sporty but places that create a sense of community and provide a variety of opportunities to move, not least to develop a vital life skill in swimming, for all generations and for those from many different backgrounds.

For the first time, Sport England, with collaboration across the sector, can quantify the value of these assets.

Using the data gathered since the pandemic using the Moving Communities platform, we are delighted to be able to share two full years of operational data since lockdowns and restrictions were lifted.

We are using data from 563 public leisure sites across England which have submitted consistent data throughout that period. Importantly, this is the largest sample size that we've ever had and would not have been possible without the support of public operating partners and local authorities. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those partners who have worked with us in sharing consistently high-quality data – your support and foresight allows our sector to champion itself.

The key message is one of resilience. A pandemic, a cost-of-living crisis as well as rising staffing and energy costs brought a level of challenge in those two years that felt relentless and unscalable at times. The sector could have taken an approach of just trying to 'tough it out' during those testing times. However, the sector responded positively, and this data set played a significant role in clearly articulating the challenges faced, resulting in funding provided by the government and Sport England through the **Swimming Pool Support Fund**.

The data shows that more people are using the services for a range of physical activity choices. Importantly, it's this activity that has driven an average total social value per participant of approximately £119 in the last year. Interestingly, users from deprived areas are growing. This participation increase correlates with sectoral growth in income, not just in a particular facility type or management type, but across the entire sample reviewed. This sector has not only been resilient but is transforming and reestablishing itself at a pivotal time.

For Sport England, the public leisure sector has a central role to play in the delivery of our **Uniting the Movement strategy**, as it is a core element of each of the five Big Issues we have identified as having the greatest potential for preventing and tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity.

These facilities are vital to our communities' wellbeing. As local authorities continue to re-examine the purpose of their public provision to deliver local community outcomes and move to a broader active wellbeing service, we hope this report serves to cement wider collaboration for a renewed sense of purpose.

More and more are transitioning to an active wellbeing service as evidenced in Sport England's **Future of Public Leisure report (Towards an Active Wellbeing Service)** and we are seeing a gradual change in terminology including in this report.

The refocussed **Place-based Physical Activity Leadership Networks** shows continued commitment to this direction of travel presented by stakeholders in its recent publication, **An Active Wellbeing Service: A Movement for Change** alongside the report **Unlocking the Potential** by the National Sector Partners Group.

I would also like to thank the consortium of partners who deliver the service, including **Sheffield Hallam University**, **Right Directions**, **Active Insight** and **4Global** as lead partner. My thanks too to the Moving Communities Board who have been instrumental in providing strategic direction and highlighting opportunities for wider development.

We will continue to work with them and the hundreds of sites who now regularly engage with Moving Communities to further showcase the work of this part of our ecosystem.

Lisa Dodd-Mayne
Executive Director – Place, Sport England

About the service

Sport England's Moving Communities started in March 2021 as part of the implementation of the government's £100m National Leisure Recovery Fund, which supported outsourced public leisure provision to reopen following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The service has a focus to collect user participation, financial, customer experience and service delivery data at individual facility level for public leisure sites. The data is then standardised and presented in dashboard format with a series of filters and benchmarks. This functionality enables local authorities, leisure providers and policymakers to compare their performance and inform strategic decisions about where time, effort and money are best invested to benefit local communities and the audiences most in need of help.

Tools such as maps and a calculator to measure the wider social impacts of physical activity taking place at these facilities, based on the latest research from Sheffield Hallam Sport Industry Research Centre, are available to all partners free of charge via the secure platform portal. You can also read more information on the operating model and dashboards.

Scale and data capture methodology

In 2022, there were 1,384 facilities registered on the platform from 301 local authorities in England.

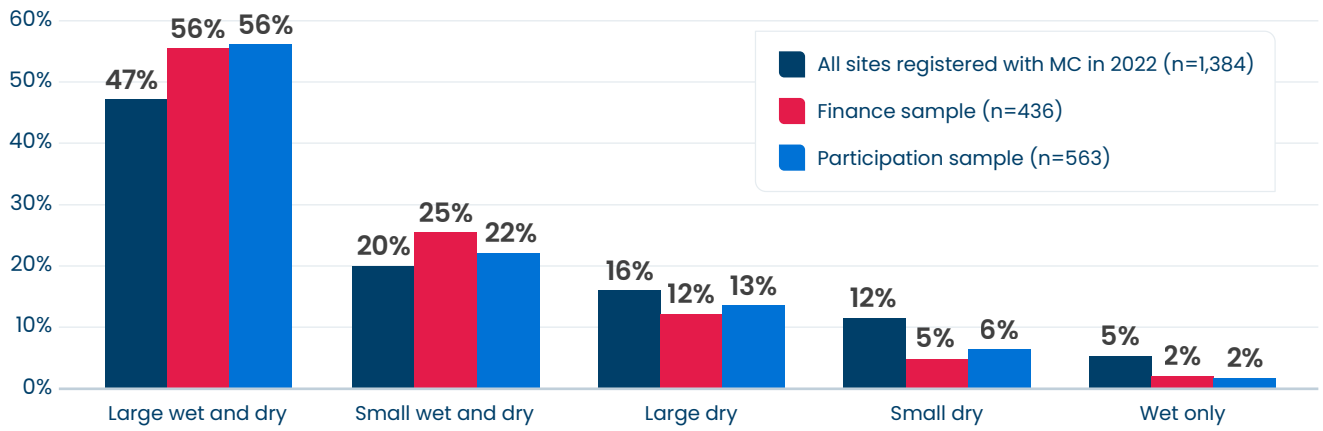
The participation feed is automated from a facility's leisure management booking system wherever possible and updated monthly, whereas the financial data is updated manually on a quarterly basis.

The Customer Experience survey is an online survey administered annually through local authorities and operating partners to users who have visited the facility in the last month asking for feedback on their most recent visit.

The service delivery assessments are carried out at bespoke times relevant to that facility's operational performance as part of Sport England's Quest service.

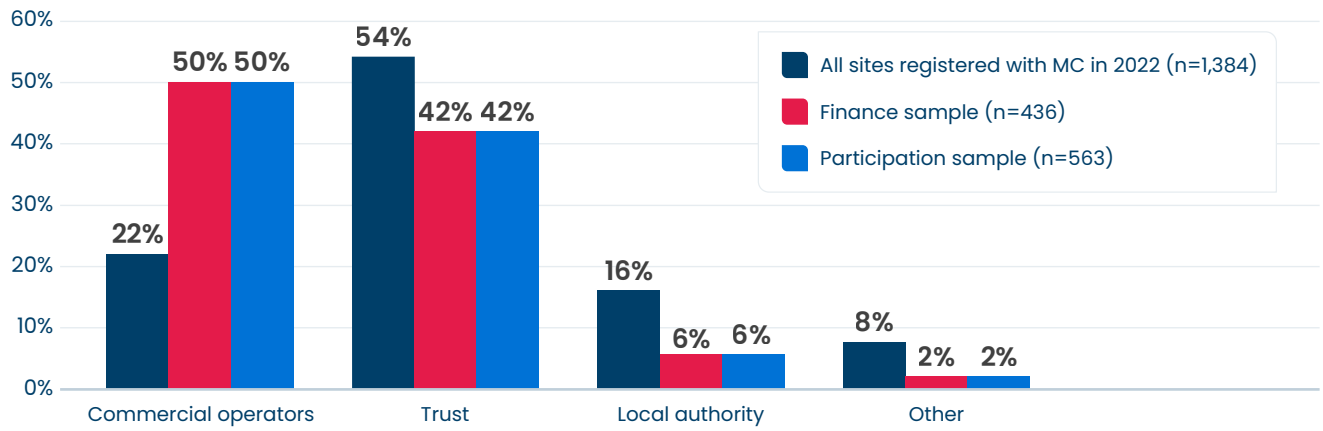
Facility breakdown by facility types

(See Glossary for terms)



Site breakdown by management types (as defined in Active Places Power)

(See Glossary for terms)



Focus of this report

This report has been produced by the Moving Communities consortium including Sheffield Hallam University on behalf of Sport England. The analysis focusses on a subset of the 1,384 facilities on the platform, which is specifically the 563 facilities from 184 local authorities that submitted **consistent** participation data and the 436 facilities from 166 local authorities that submitted consistent financial data for the period April 2022 to March 2024. The breakdown of those facilities is shown in the graphs on page 6.

To help the interpretation of these graphs, this shows 56% of the facilities in the finance and participation samples were large wet and dry facilities. This sample is over-representative of the overall Moving Communities portfolio in 2022 in which 47% of facilities were large wet and dry facilities. The sample is also over-representative of commercial operators (50% v 22%) and under-representative of all other types of operators.

Analysis method

Facilities have been included in this report on a 'matched pairs' basis, which means that every site included was in both the 2022 sample and the 2023 sample. No statistical testing has been completed given that the report looks at the differences between two populations (in April 2022/March 23 v April 2023/March 24). However, because the findings in this report are reflective of a sample of facilities that is known to be unrepresentative of all facilities, the results should be interpreted with this caveat in mind.

Section 1

Participation

'Participants' are defined on Moving Communities as (known) individual users of facilities whose demographic data – specifically age, gender and postcode – are available. 'Throughput' is defined as visits to the facility split by the activity completed and is made up of participants (as defined above) and unknown casual users.

The annual analysis, based on 563 sites, revealed that the average number of participants increased by 7% whilst the overall average throughput at these facilities increased by 5% in 2023/24. The increase in the average number of unique participants (+7%) is greater than the increase in the average number of visits per participant (+5%). This finding is positive because it means the increase in throughput has been driven primarily by more people using public leisure facilities.

Gender

The gender profile of unique participants in 2023/24 across those 563 sites was split between 52% females and 48% males. This finding is consistent with previous research into sport and leisure facilities from the National Benchmarking Services. Given that national surveys have consistently shown that men participate more in sport and physical activity than women, these facilities are a welcome counterpoint to the national picture. Access to swimming, fitness activities and group exercise enable women to access sport and physical activity that meets their needs.

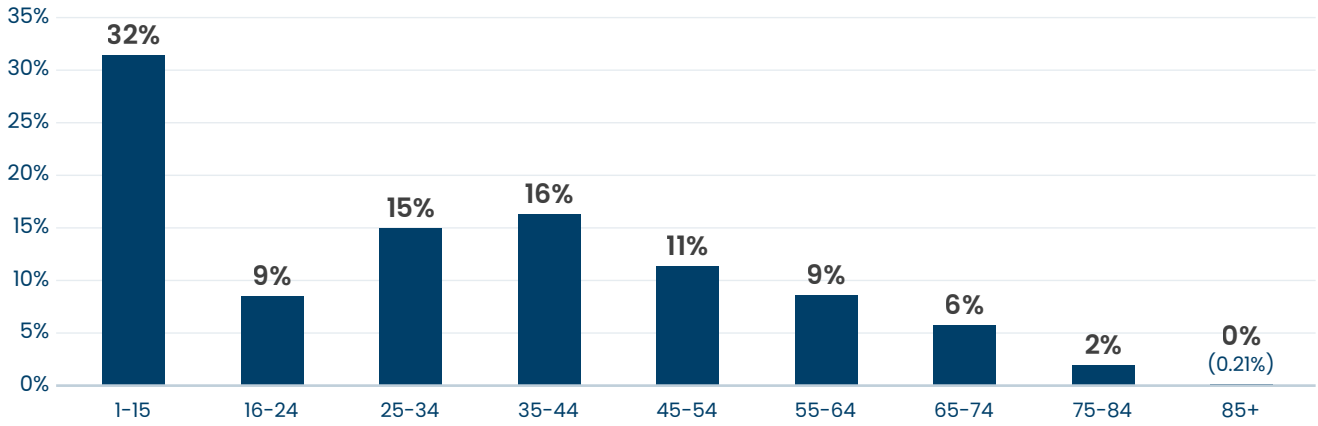
Year	Average participants per site	Average throughput per site	Average frequency of visit per participant
2022-23	14,428	251,396	17.4
2023-24	15,419	263,705	17.1
2023-24 v 2022-23	+7% +991	+5% +12,309	-2% -0.3

Age

Percentage of unique participants by age in 2023/24

The age profile of those unique participants in 2023/24 across those 563 sites was split as shown in the graph below.

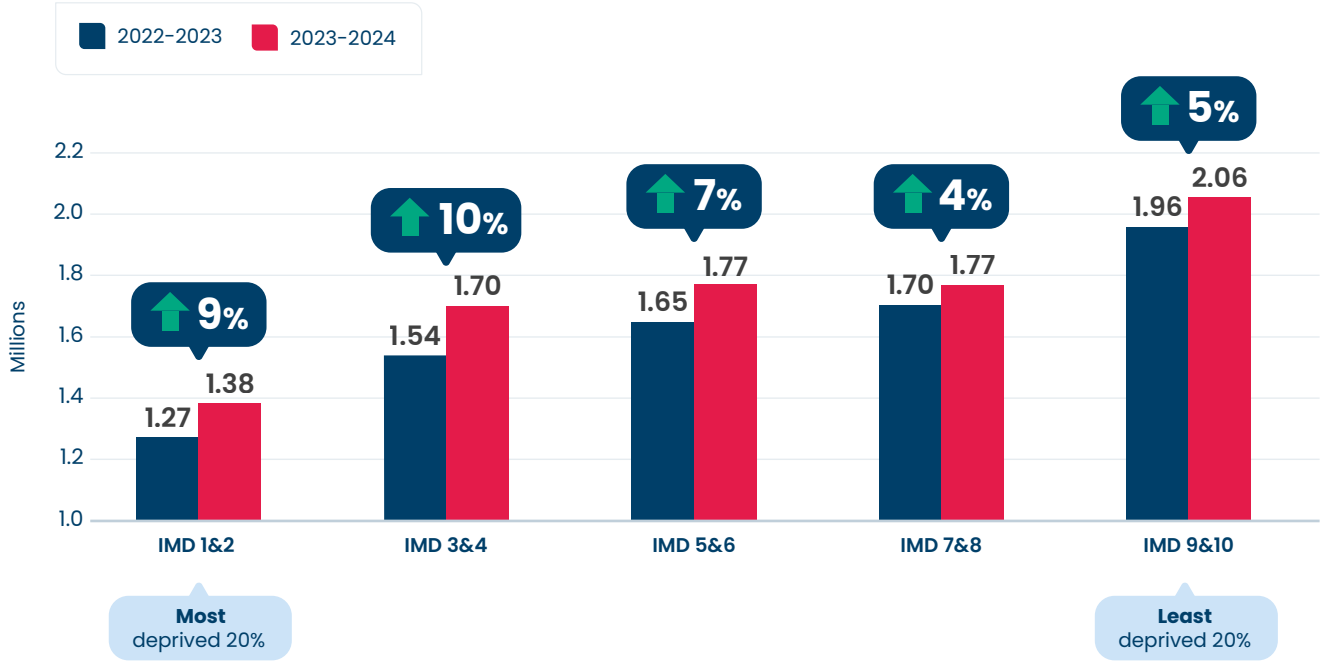
The headline finding that 32% of participants are aged 1-15 probably reflects the importance of swimming lessons for young people as a key driver of visits in leisure facilities. As we see routinely in national surveys, participation tends to fall steadily with age once people reach their mid-40s.



Deprivation

Number of participants by IMD (millions)

Participant numbers from across all areas in England based on levels of deprivation continued to grow in 2023/24. The deprivation of place is taken from the Office for National Statistics' Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), where the numbers 1-10 refer to deciles, and is based on a user's home postcode.

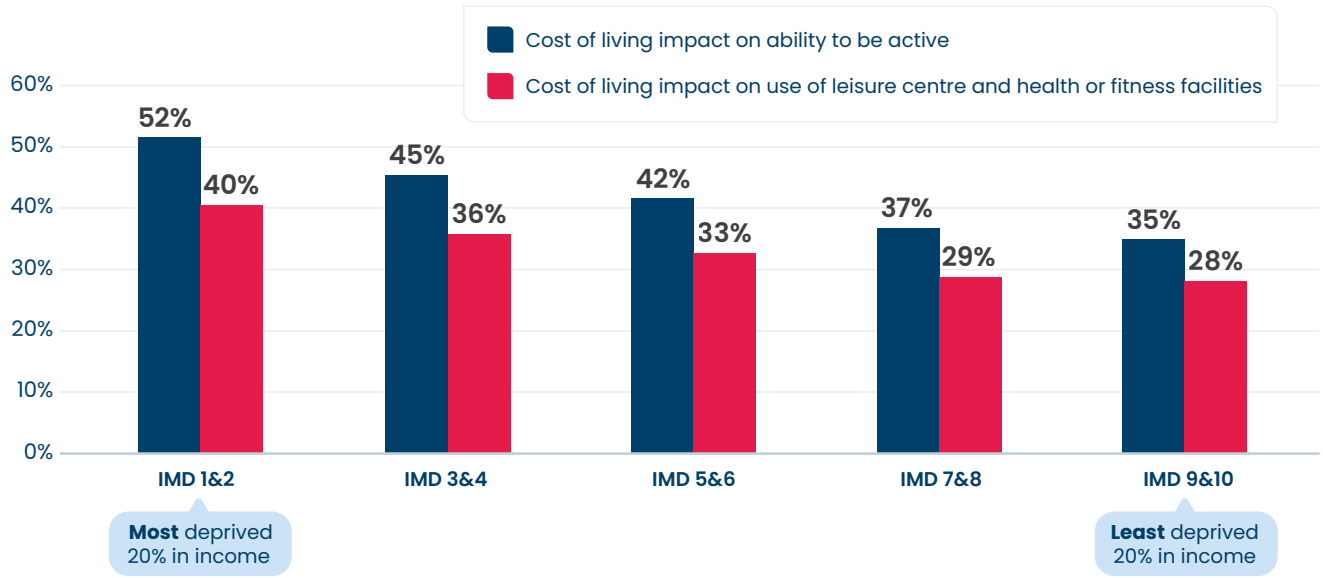


Based on the changing profile of users in the last year, facilities have improved their reach into more deprived communities, which plays a role in helping to reduce inequalities. The number of users from the most deprived 20% areas (IMD 1 & 2) has increased by 9%, which is the second highest increase compared to the 10% increase for IMD 3 & 4. Proportionately, the greatest gains have been amongst people who are living in the most deprived areas in England. Whilst operating in deprived areas has the potential to bring about significant social gains, the Customer Experience survey provides key insight into helping tailor the offer accordingly.

Residents living in areas with high levels of deprivation, especially those with low income, have been significantly affected by the increase in living costs. For instance, 52% of users living in the most income-deprived 20% areas (IMD Income Decile 1 and 2) reported that this has had a negative impact on their ability to stay active, compared with 35% of users residing in the least income-deprived 20% areas (IMD Income Decile 9 and 10).

Furthermore, 40% of users living in IMD Income Decile 1 and 2 reported that the increase in living costs has had a negative impact on their use of leisure facilities to be active, compared to 28% users in IMD Income Decile 9 and 10. This finding is likely to be linked to those with higher income deprivation having less disposable income to spend on sports and leisure activities. Despite the negative impacts of the increase in the cost of living, people from deprived areas have nonetheless been important drivers of the growth in participation in public leisure centres. This finding points perhaps to the development of a resilient habit, which they are prepared to prioritise.

Percentage of negative impacts by level of income deprivation*



* IMD in this chart is based on income domain (one of the seven domains that form the Index of Multiple Deprivation, IMD)

These findings correlate with the results of the Customer Experience survey where 40% of respondents said the cost-of-living increase had had a significant negative or some negative impact on their ability to be active. Furthermore, 32% said it had had a significant negative or some negative impact on their use of sports, leisure and health/fitness facilities.

Activity

In 2023/24, the largest increase in number of participants by activity type was seen in fitness activities, which increased by 20%. Swimming provides a mixed picture with growth of 7% in swimming lessons, but a decline in other swimming activities of 3%.

Feedback gathered at Quest assessments has identified that in some cases, there has been a focus on providing swimming lessons to those participants who missed out during Covid

In addition, reduced operational hours because of rising costs has meant wider swimming activities are being removed or substituted for lessons, which tend to generate higher income.

Number of participants	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24 v 2022-23
Swimming activities	3,212,268	3,108,247	-3%
Fitness (gym) activities	2,372,858	2,842,523	+20%
Other activities	2,212,957	2,422,603	+9%
Swimming lessons	876,925	934,513	+7%
Group workout activities	707,706	777,194	+10%
Sports hall activities	588,643	673,370	+14%
Outdoor activities	242,096	245,022	+1%

When looking at the Customer Experience survey data, we can also see that 86% of respondents preferred exercising in the leisure facility than in a more informal setting such as parks, and 63% of respondents stated that if they can't go to the leisure facility, they are less active. Leisure facilities played an important role in people's lifestyles in 2023. Within the Customer Experience survey responses, this finding was evident for users at dry sites and mixed sites, and among users under 65 years of age.

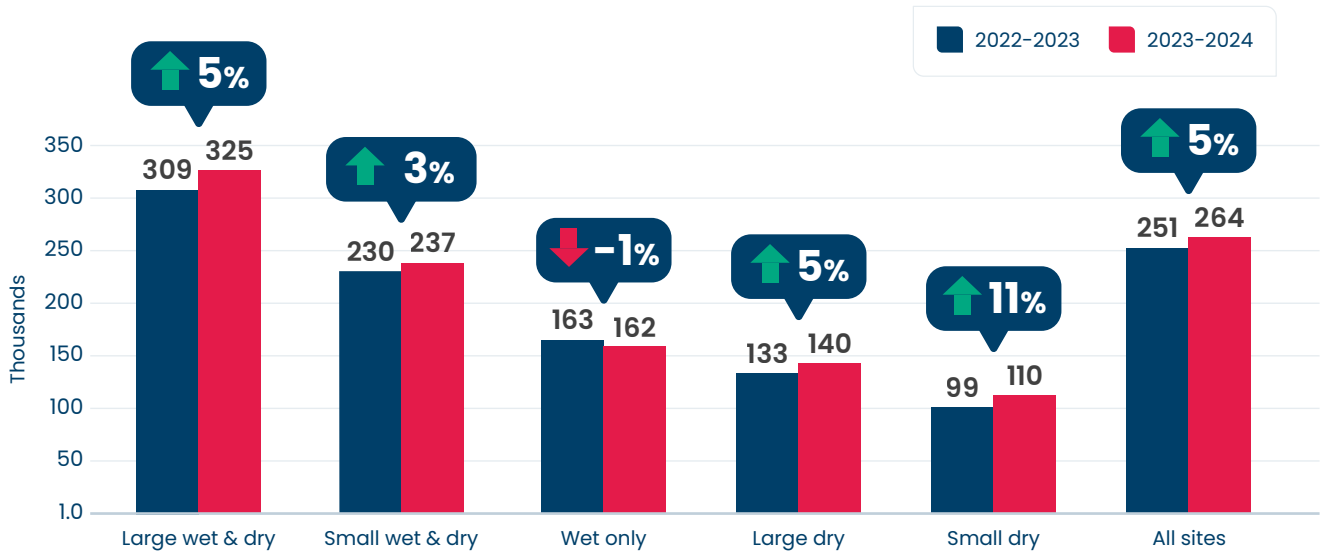
The Customer Experience survey data reveals that 86% of all genders, and from areas with different levels of deprivation.

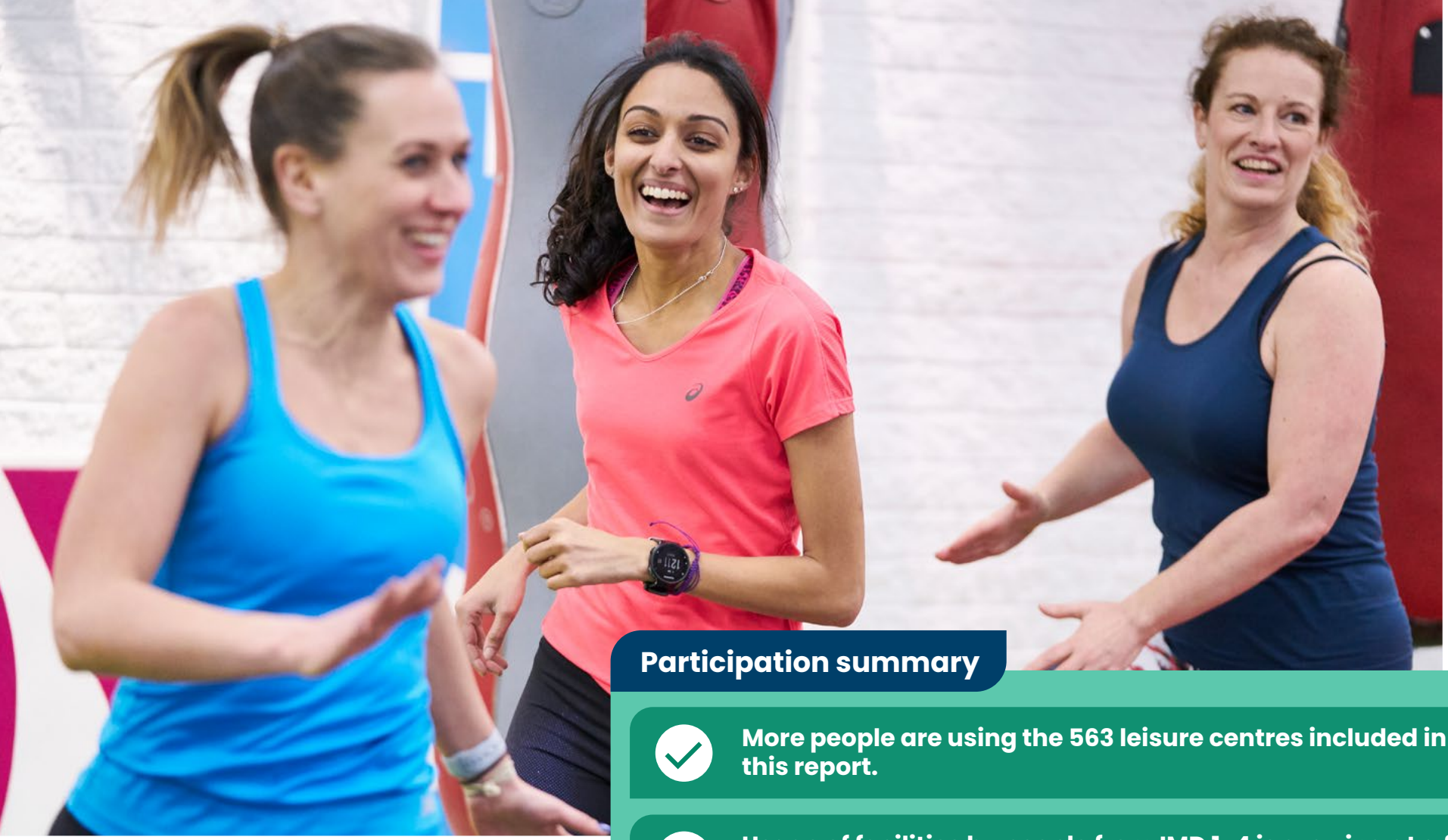
Future intentions around activity remained consistent over the last two years with 96% of respondents still stating that they intend to exercise at least once a week in the centre over the next six months. 16–24-year-olds were the age group that have the strongest intentions to exercise more often at the leisure facility than in more informal settings.

Visits by facility type

Overall, average throughput has increased across all facility types, except for wet sites, which is consistent with the small reduction in swimming participants. On average, mixed sites (wet and dry sites) were the most visited in both years, with 3% and 5% increases in throughput for small mixed sites and large mixed sites respectively in 2023/24. Although having noticeably lower throughput compared to other types of facilities, dry sites were becoming increasingly popular among participants, showing increases of 5% to 11%.

Throughput per site by facility types ('000)





Participation summary

- More people are using the 563 leisure centres included in this report.
- Usage of facilities by people from IMD 1-4 is growing at a faster rate than other IMD areas.
- Swimming and fitness activities continue to be the two most popular activities at 563 centres registered with Moving Communities.

Section 2

Social value

Research conducted by Sport England, DCMS and the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University in 2018 provided a clear evidence base to quantify the economic and social value for sport and physical activity.

Moving Communities uses this research in its social value dashboard to enable local authorities and operating partners to monetise the social value created by participation in public leisure facilities across four key indicators as shown opposite. The calculations are based on 2019/20 prices and have been used consistently across the results below, which has the effect of removing any impact of inflation in our comparisons.

Because of more people participating in physical activity at public leisure facilities, the total social value generated has also increased between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Of the 563 sites submitting participation data over the two-year period, the total social value increased by almost £50m.

The total social value generated in 2022/23 was £842,597,784 from 7.27m participants at an average of £115.92 per person.

Social Value

Physical and mental health

Total savings in health and social care costs achieved through the reduced risk of various health conditions and the average annual costs per person diagnosed with the condition.

Subjective wellbeing

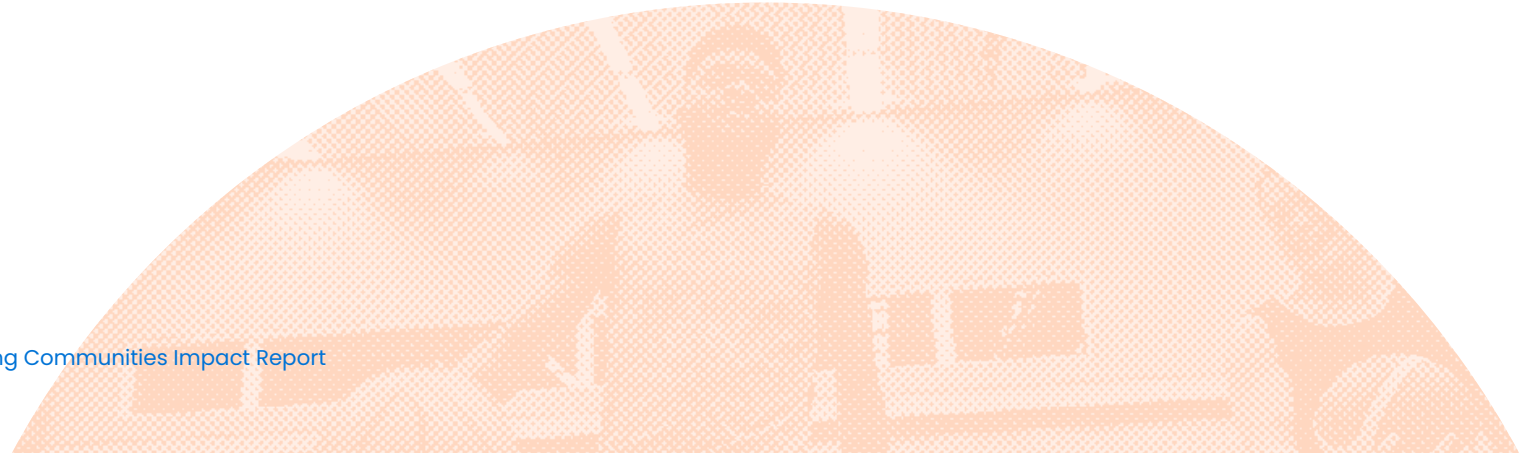
The value of higher wellbeing derived by sports participants from engagement in sport (using the wellbeing valuation approach).

Individual development

Improved educational attainment through sports participation valued using lifetime productivity returns and higher starting salaries after graduation.

Social and community development

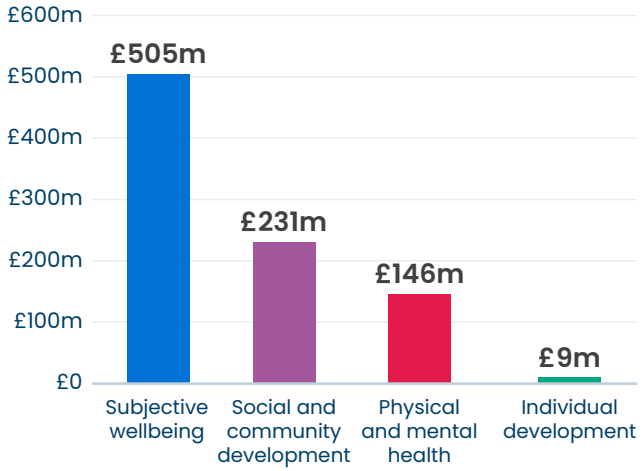
Savings in the criminal justice system costs derived from the reduced crime rates for young people, plus increased social capital derived from enhanced social networks, trust and reciprocity.



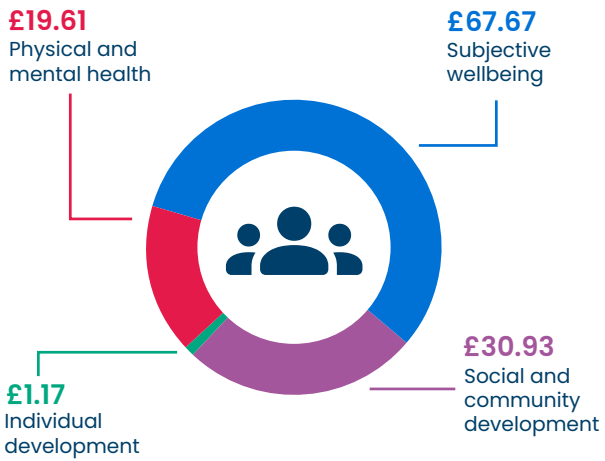
The total social value generated in 2023/24 was £890,658,342 from 7.46m participants at an average of £119.38 per person.

In 2023/24, the social value generated by the participation in leisure facilities was estimated to be split across the four key outcome areas as shown to the right.

Key outcome areas of social value 2023/24

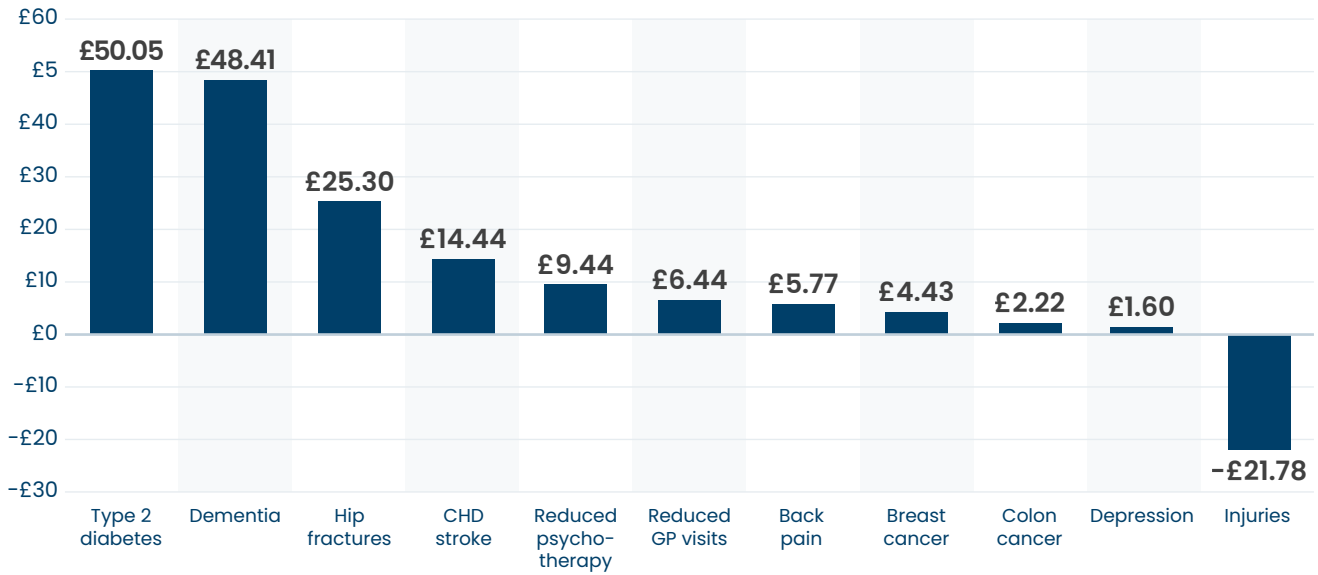


Social value per participant in 2023/24



The total net health savings generated by physical activity in leisure facilities (£146.3m) can be broken down into the sub-categories shown to the right and includes any negative impact caused by injuries.

Savings in £millions across long-term health conditions in 2023/24



Social value summary

- 7 million participants at 563 leisure facilities in England in 2023/24 generated £891m in wider social value.
- The most significant contribution is towards subjective wellbeing, the value of higher wellbeing derived by by participants engaging in sport and physical activity.
- The average total social value per participant is estimated to be £119 in 2023/24.

Section 3

Finance

Moving Communities collects financial returns every quarter split by income and expenditure fields. The Finance analysis focuses on a sample of 436 sites which provided consistent returns over the two-year period.

The analysis below focuses on a sample of 436 sites which provided consistent returns over the two-year period. To avoid skewing the data by using averages (or means), scores are reported by quartiles, which has the impact of smoothing out extreme scores at the top end and bottom end of a distribution. The median score, or 50th percentile, is the score for a facility at the midpoint of a distribution, in this case the midpoint in a distribution of 463 sites placed in rank order.

Activity income

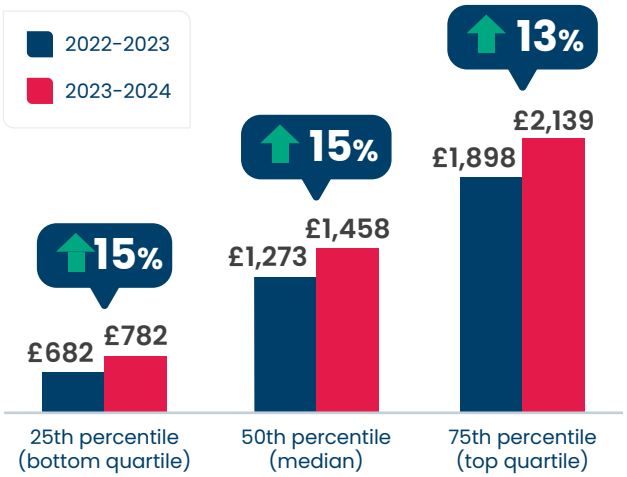
From the top of the bottom quartile (25% of centres) to the bottom of the top quartile (75% of centres) activity income ranged from £682k to £1.9m in 2022/23 and from £782K to £2.1m in 2023/24.

The income level for sites ranked in the top quartile was at least 174% higher than those ranked in the bottom quartile in 2023/24.

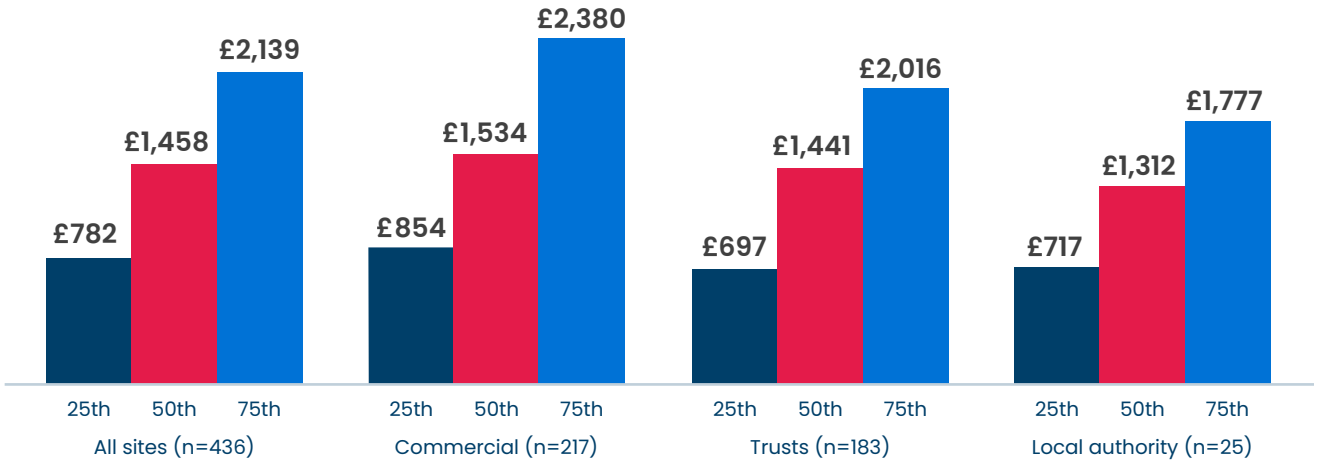
It is relevant to note that some sites in the bottom quartile experienced decreased income in 2023/24 as a result of factors such as closures, reduced operating hours, reduced demand or reduced prices.

Income at sites managed by commercial operators (as defined in **Active Places**) was 6% and 17% higher compared with trust- and local authority-managed sites, respectively, at the median level.

Activity income per site (£'000)

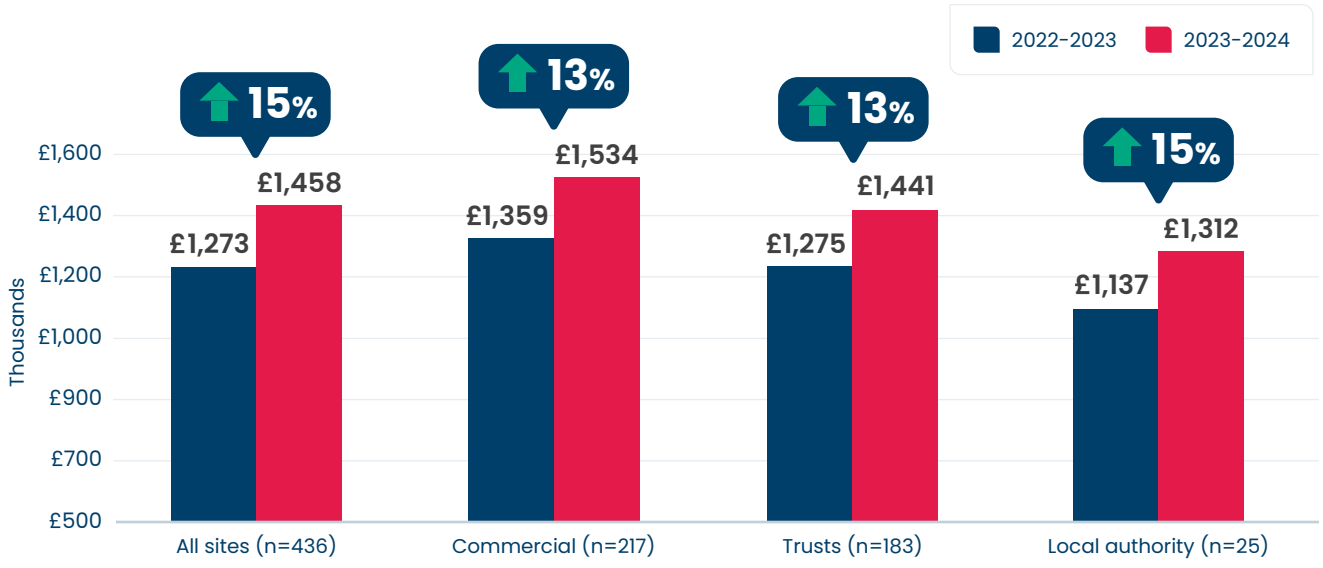


2023/24 Activity income per site (£'000)



Income generated by activities at sites managed by local authorities appeared to be increasing at a slightly faster rate (15%) than those managed by commercial operators or trusts (both at 13%). This difference is leading to a closing of the gaps between the operator types in terms of income generation performance.

Median activity income per site (£'000)

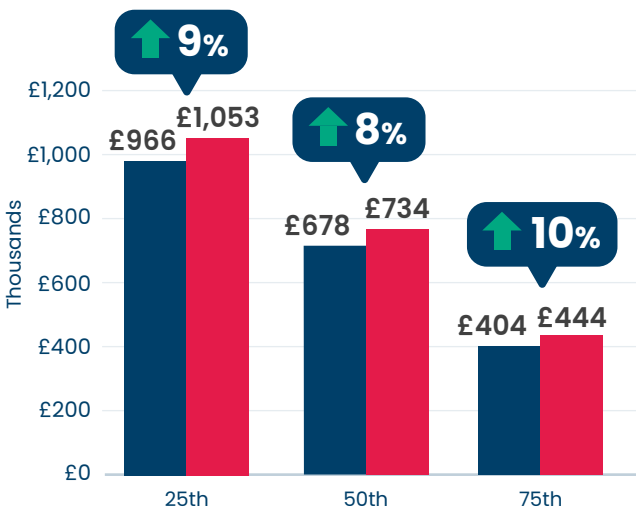


Note. The sample size for the local authority is relatively small (n=25), and therefore, the results are indicative.

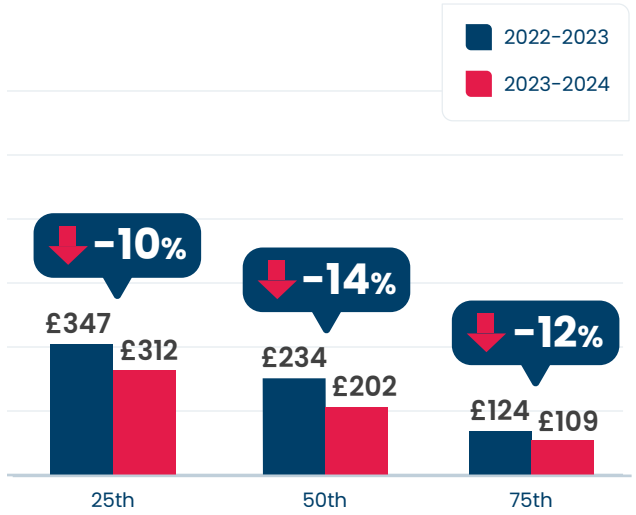
Staffing and utlity costs

Staffing and utility costs typically account for between 62% and 72% of total operating expenditure at the sites in the sample. At the median (50%) level, staff costs have increased by £56k (+8%) in 2023/24, whilst utility costs have decreased by £32k (-14%). These changes have led to a net increase in operating costs of £24k per site.

Staffing costs per site (£0,000)



Utility costs per site (£0,000)



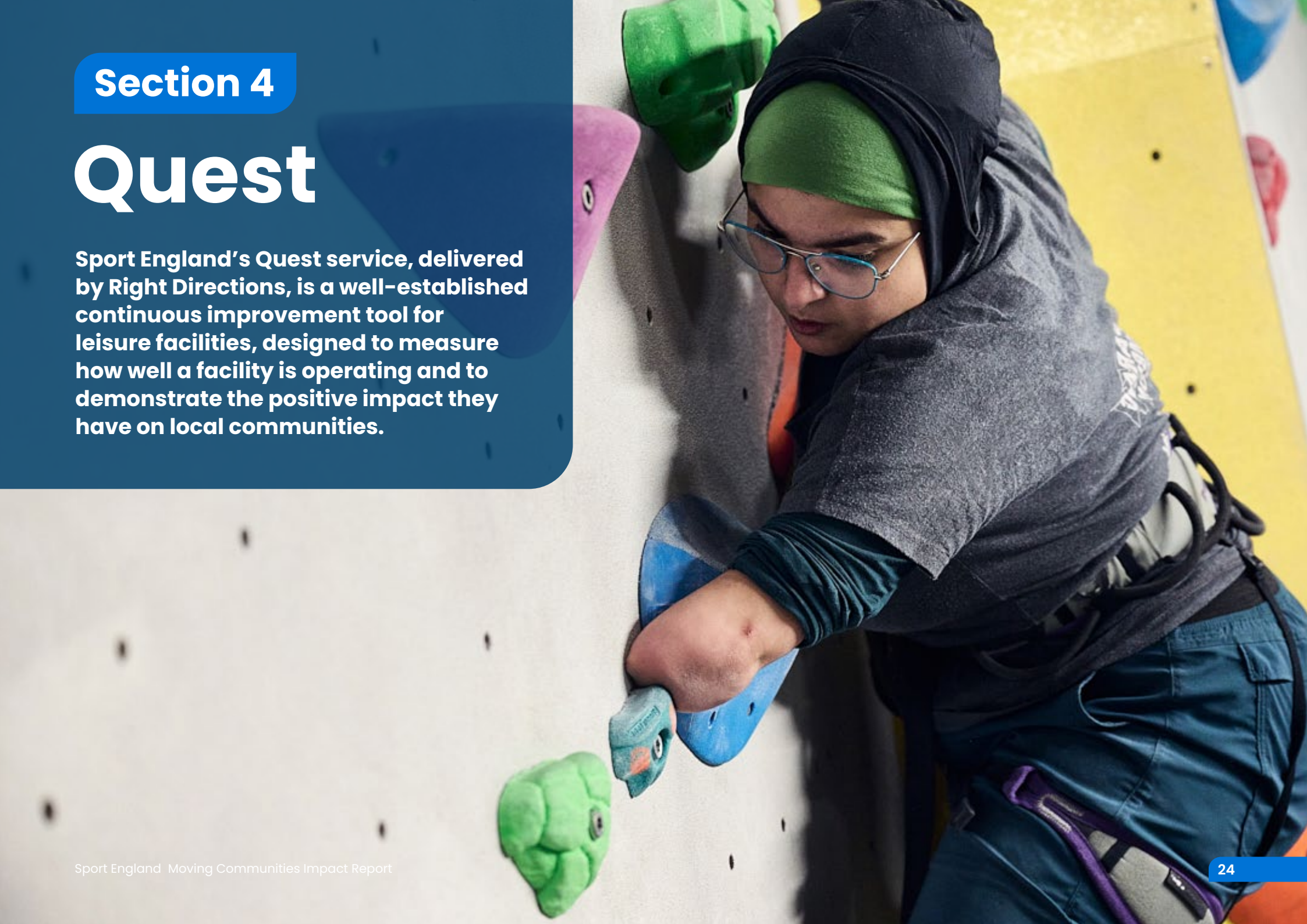
Finance summary

- Income has increased generally in 2023/24 and whilst it differs significantly within he sample, all show increased income relative to 2022/23, with commercial operator managed sites showing the highest incomes.
- Activity income increased at a similar rate across sites under different types of management operators at the median level.
- 57% of the increase in staffing costs has been offset by the decrease in utility costs.

Section 4

Quest

Sport England's Quest service, delivered by Right Directions, is a well-established continuous improvement tool for leisure facilities, designed to measure how well a facility is operating and to demonstrate the positive impact they have on local communities.

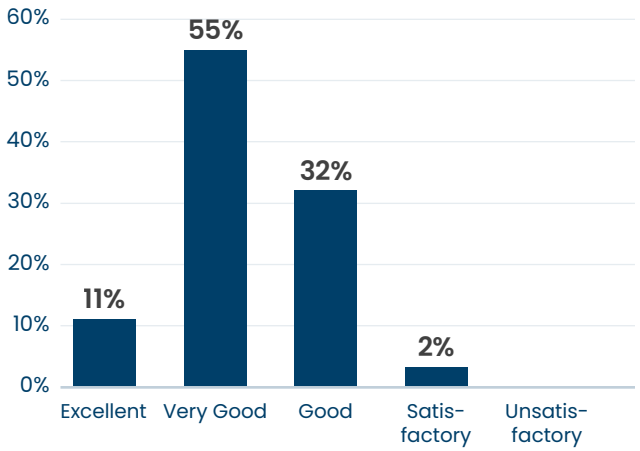


Quest helps partners identify and prioritise areas for improvement in the quality of services and facilities using well qualified assessors who have extensive sector knowledge. Through mystery visits and independent reviews, the Quest scheme can help local partners assess their delivery as well as have the quality of local work recognised and nationally accredited.

From the 360 **Quest** assessments completed in 2022-23, sites were assessed, scored and awarded one of the following bandings: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. Over 50% of sites are achieving a 'very good' overall score in their assessment but only 11% reached the 'excellent' score, which is lower than pre-Covid levels when 77% of sites scored 'very good' and 17% of facilities scored 'excellent'.

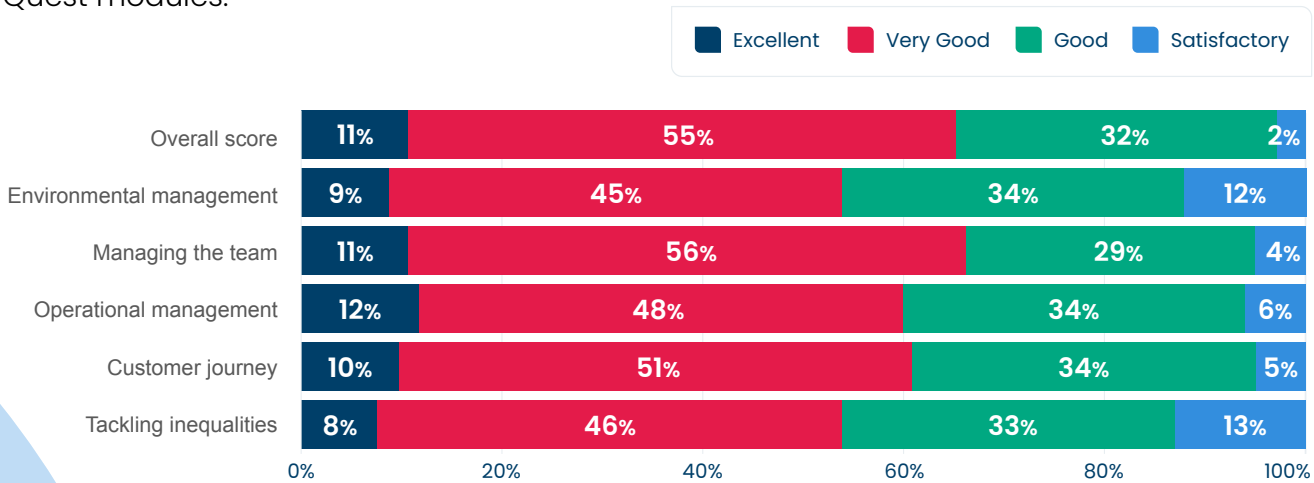
Facilities excel in the Operational Management and Customer Journey modules. Facilities are beginning to adopt the Tackling Inequalities module, introduced in 2022, but work remains to show that a facility's customers reflect the diversity of their community and that they have adopted a co-designed approach to support people experiencing inequalities. The Environmental Management average score is 'Good' showing potential for the sector to drive standards and operational practices to impact on sustainability. Many examples of best practice and high performance have been observed, which are shared via webinars.

Quest banding from 360 assessments



Breakdown of core module scores 2023/34

The percentage of scores at the top and bottom bandings are shown below for the core Quest modules:



The highest scoring questions across the core modules are in the table opposite and show the strength of the service at the assessed sites. These are consistent with the Customer Experience satisfaction scores, which show 87% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied that staff are helpful and friendly and 83% who say teaching/coaching staff are suitably qualified for the activities that they are involved in.

Module	Question	% of sites that scored Excellent
Customer journey	Were the team knowledgeable and informative?	**80%**
Customer journey	Was the interaction with the team positive and enthusiastic?	**77%**
Environmental management	Are the environmental conditions acceptable?	**77%**
Managing the team	Do the team appear to be well-managed and carry out their duties and activities in a professional manner?	**75%**
Managing the team	Was the activity you took part in delivered by the team/staff member in a safe, enjoyable manner?	**70%**
Operational management	Is there an appropriate provision of changing rooms and toilets to meet the needs of all customers?	**69%**
Environmental management	Is there a system in place to ensure hazardous, clinical and medical waste is disposed of correctly, with records maintained?	**68%**

The lowest scoring questions across the core modules are in the table opposite and show the opportunities to improve the service at the assessed sites with a focus on continuing to tackle inequality and increase the level of data capture, which are two of the key objectives of the Moving Communities service.

Module	Question	% of sites that scored Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory
Operational management	Can the facility demonstrate the processes in place are making a difference?	**80%**
Tackling inequalities	How do you ensure your communications are inclusive, effective and reach your intended audience(s)?	**77%**
Tackling inequalities	Can you demonstrate the impact and difference you have made in tackling inequalities?	**77%**
Customer journey	When you visit the facility for the first time, do they capture your personal information?	**75%**
Managing the team	Do you have a wellbeing policy on which staff have been trained?	**70%**
Environmental management	Can you demonstrate you have reduced the facility's environmental impact and carbon footprint?	**69%**
Managing the team	Do all contracted staff take part in an appraisal?	**68%**

Quest summary

- Over 50% of sites completing a Quest assessment are achieving a 'Very Good' overall score in their assessment but only 11% reached the 'Excellent' score, which is lower than pre-Covid levels.
- Facilities excel in the Operational Management and Customer Journey modules.
- The average scores for the Tackling Inequalities and Environmental Management modules are 'Good', showing potential for the sector to drive operational practices in these areas.

Section 5

Customer experience

Every year, Moving Communities administers a Customer Experience survey with the support of local authorities and leisure operating partners to gather feedback from users who visited the site in the last month about their time at the centre.

It should be noted that the number of survey responses varied per site, suggesting that the survey findings may be influenced to some extent by sites with a higher number of responses. Furthermore, proportionately more females and older users have completed the survey. This section of the report should be interpreted with this *caveat* in mind.

The table shows the number of responses across sites for the two surveys conducted in 2022 and 2023.

2022	2023
698 sites	**613** sites
37,659 responses	**34,189** responses
Range of responses per site: **1 to 570**	Range of responses per site: **1 to 337**

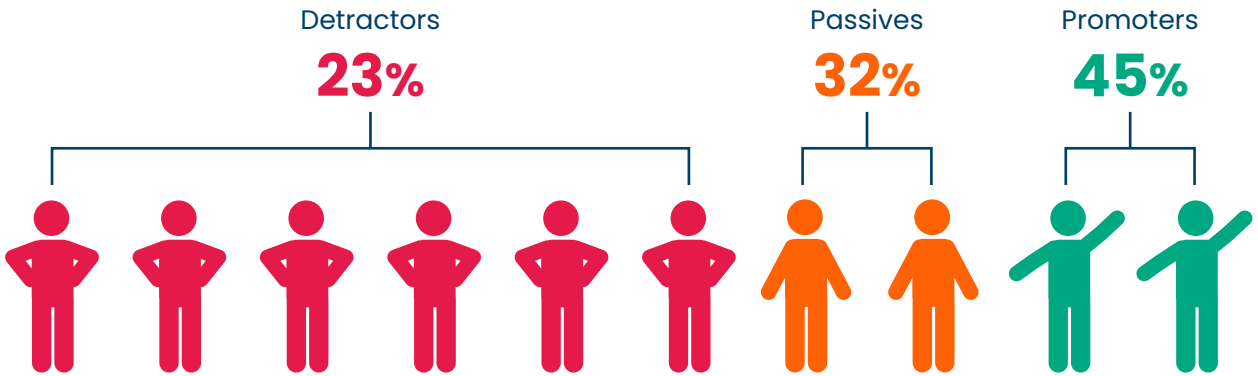
Net Promoter Score

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a market research metric that is based on a survey question asking respondents to rate the likelihood that they would recommend a company, product, or service to a friend or colleague. The NPS subdivides respondents into "promoters" who provide ratings of 9 or 10, "passives" who provide ratings of 7 or 8, and "detractors" who provide ratings of 6 or lower.

Calculating the NPS involves subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters collected by the survey. The higher the NPS, the better and it is typically interpreted as an indicator of customer loyalty and in some cases, is argued to correlate with revenue growth relative to competitors within an industry.

Overall Net Promoter Score

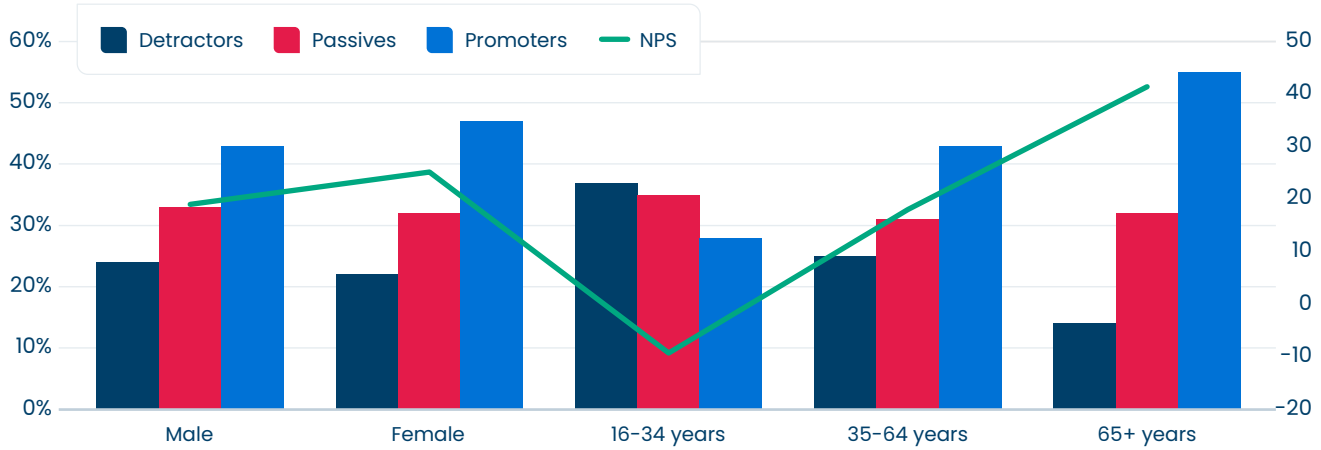
The Net Promoter Score was 22 in the 2023 Customer Experience survey. This has decreased significantly from 35 in October 2021 and mirrors the score of 22 in October 2022.



Promoters 45% - Detractors 23% = Net Promoter Score 22

It is important to note that this overall score varies by age, where the NPS is significantly lower for 16-34-year-olds, and higher for 65+ and by gender, where NPS is higher for females, as shown in the graph below:

NPS using Customer Experience survey 2023

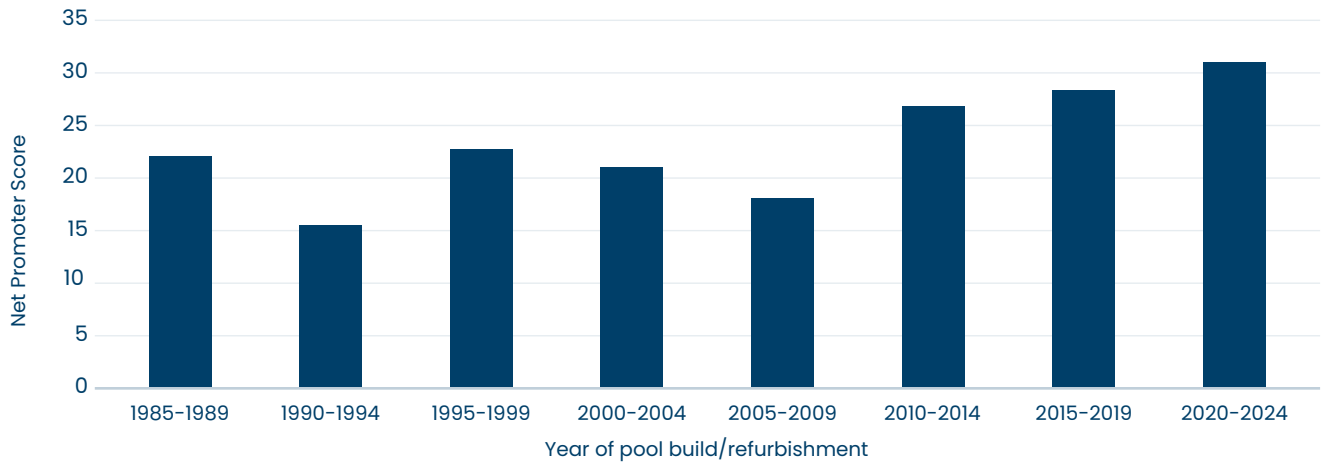


Further analysis by Sheffield Hallam University, Right Directions and Active Insight has shown that the top 10 Quest sites from 2022-23 who all participated in the 2023 Customer Experience survey had an average NPS of +39 points, which was 77% higher than the sector average of +22 points from the 2022 and 2023 customer surveys. As identified in the Quest assessments and module scores, their focus on continuous improvement and developing excelling systems and processes is resulting in delivering a better than sector average customer experience and building customer loyalty.

The data was also used to test a particular hypothesis which is often posed by stakeholders that swimmers using newer or more recently refurbished swimming facilities would have a higher NPS than those using older facilities. This analysis was conducted by using the Customer Experience survey NPS scores for those who participated in swimming at their last visit (12,167 respondents) and was cross-referenced with data from Active Places Power on the year of build/refurbishment (434 sites).

There is some correlation that can be seen between NPS and pool age for swimming pool users. The NPS is 28.5 for pools built or refurbished from 2010 onwards, compared with 18.7 for pools built or refurbished pre-2010.

Swimmers' NPS by year of swimming pool build/refurbishment



Service attributes

The survey also asked users to rate service attributes in order of importance and satisfaction. Staff being helpful/friendly and cleanliness were the two most important factors to the sample when thinking about visiting a leisure facility, both scoring 99%, which have been consistent scores over the last two years.

Attributes with wide gaps between importance and satisfaction are important to address promptly to improve services. Staff being helpful/friendly was the most satisfactory element relating to the leisure centre experience, with 87% of the sample agreeing that they were Very or Quite Satisfied. The main 'gap' between importance and satisfaction is in cleanliness, where there is a 33% gap between how important it is to customers and how well it is being delivered in practice.

Customer experience summary

- The sector's overall Net Promoter Score stands at 22 for the second year running, down significantly from an NPS of 35 in 2021.
- The top 10 performing Quest sites from 2022-23 who all participated in the 2023 Customer Experience survey had an average NPS that was almost 80% higher than the sector average.
- The NPS is 28.5 for pools built or refurbished from 2010 onwards, compared with 18.7 for pools built or refurbished pre-2010.

Section 6

Data Lens

Moving Communities works collaboratively with CIMSPA and its Data Lens platform to provide additional workforce data that enables a comprehensive oversight of the sector's performance. Our aim is to link the Moving Communities data with workforce data in the future to highlight key trends and insights.

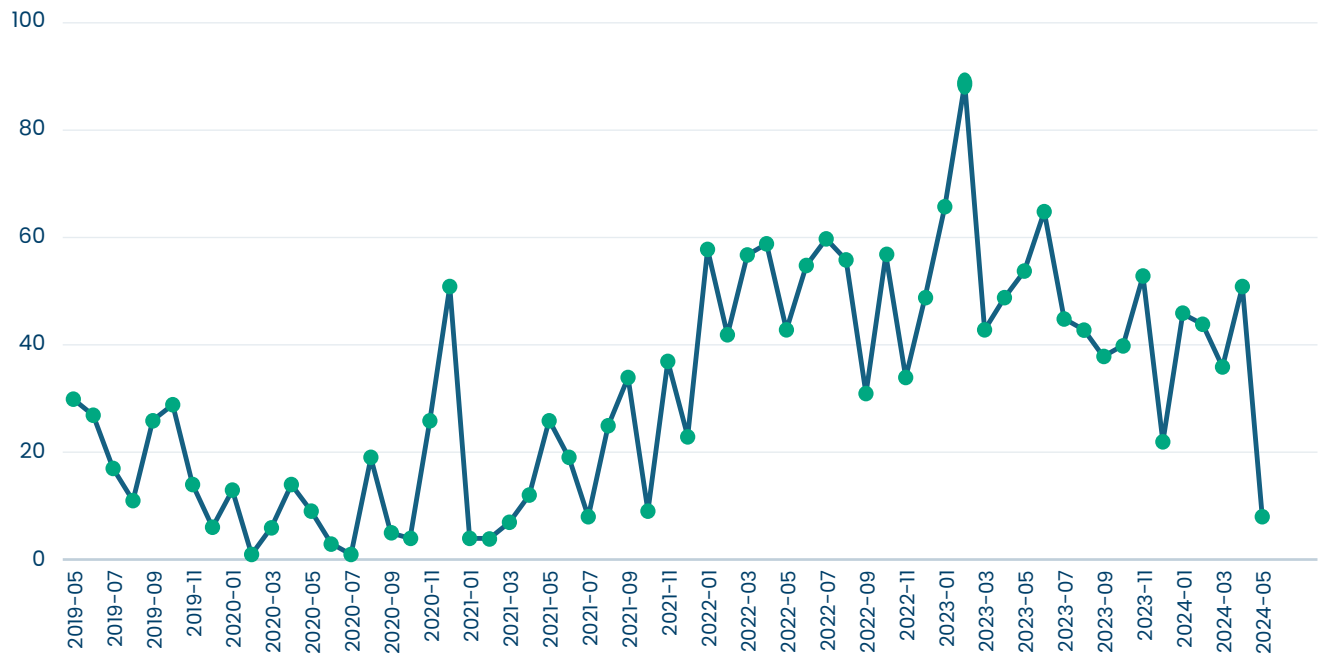
CIMSPA®

Job postings

Tracking the trends in job postings from organisations involved in Moving Communities reveals significant peaks and troughs in recruitment activity. Those organisations have shown an increase in their recruitment activity post-Covid, indicating a marked recovery from the pandemic-induced recruitment slump. Job postings increased by 1550% between January 2021 and January 2023.

Analysis shows that there have been 185 job postings by considered organisations in the current calendar year up to May, which is a 70% increase compared with the first five months of 2023. Whilst it remains to be seen whether the year on year total will reach the highs of 2022 and 2023, the trends depicted within the chart highlight the industry's resilience and recovery post-Covid.

Number of jobs postings



Average advertised salaries

The median advertised salary data reflects a diverse range of compensation across different occupations. The data uses **SOC (Standard Occupational Classification) codes**, an international standard for defining occupations and job roles, to collate its findings. Frontline occupations commanded higher advertised salaries over the 12 months from May 2023 to May 2024, with fitness and wellbeing instructors and sports coaches, instructors, and officials commanding the highest median advertised salaries. This finding may indicate employers recognising and valuing the specialised skills required by these roles.

The median advertised salaries for managers and directors also outperform other occupations and may indicate that employers recognise the importance of managerial expertise in leadership positions.

Contrastingly, many non-sector roles that make up the extended sector workforce offer lower median advertised salaries. This is likely to be attributable to the example occupations requiring fewer specialised skills.

SOC4 name	Advertised average salary
Fitness and wellbeing instructors	**£24,950**
Sports coaches, instructors and officials	**£24,742**
Managers and directors (ranges from junior managerial roles and would not include posts with salary advertised as "competitive")	**£24,114**
Receptionists	**£20,920**
Cleaners and domestics	**£20,156**
Sports and leisure assistants	**£19,900**
Kitchen and catering assistants	**£19,034**

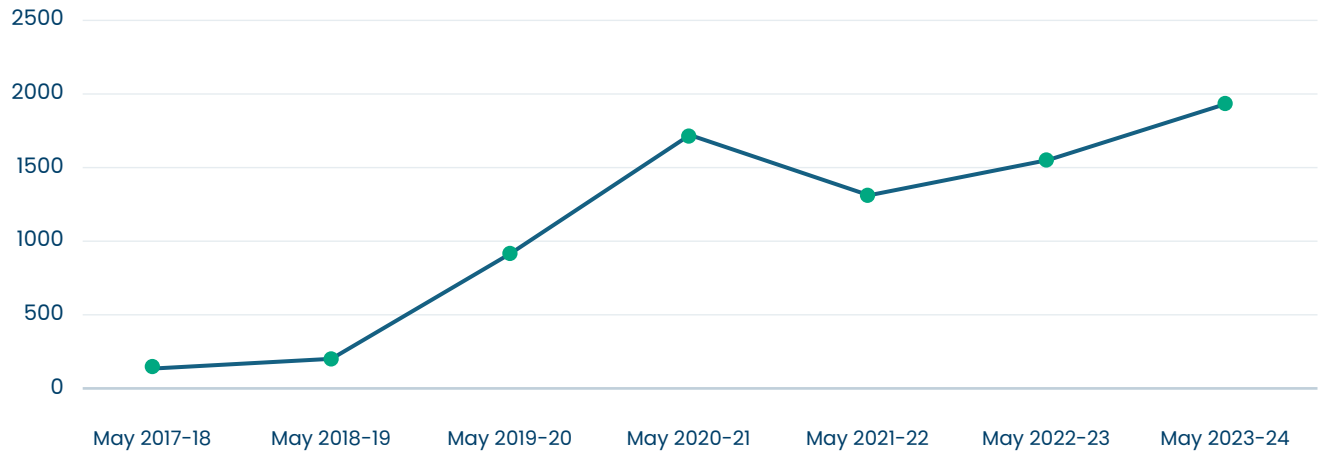
Please note that the figure provided is a median salary figure for broad 'manager' roles and may be skewed by junior roles e.g. 'junior manager', which will likely receive lower compensation. As the figure is only collated using advertised salaries over the last 12 months it is not inclusive of the salaries of those already in post.

The figure may indicate that there were more roles advertised for junior, or less senior, managers or that job postings for senior manager do not provide a salary figure and may advertise the salary as 'competitive'.

CIMSPA references

Since 2017 there has been a sharp growth in the number of job postings that make specific reference to professional recognition or accreditation with CIMSPA. This trend suggests a growing recognition of CIMSPA among sector employers and reflects a sector that is becoming increasingly professionalised.

Number of job postings referencing professional accreditation with CIMSPA



Common skills

Common skills refer to skills prevalent across multiple industries and include personal attributes, behaviours, competencies, and learned skills. The top common skills highlight sport and physical activity's nature as a frontline, people-oriented sector delivering services to participants.

Specialised skills refer to skills that are role or occupation specific and often require specific certification. The top two specialised skills – swimming pool maintenance and lifeguarding – indicate that a high proportion of advertised roles are from organisations with swimming pool facilities. As a broader trend, the sector has seen an increase in the number and diversity of skills required by employers. Skills diversity, coupled with the amalgamation of roles, means that individuals working in the sector have broader skillsets and are adaptable to the changing nature of the sector. Well-rounded individuals who possess a range of common or transferable skills can meet the multiple needs of clients and customers and can therefore increase customer satisfaction and retention.

Common skills	Specialised skills
Customer service	Swimming pool maintenance
Communication	Lifeguarding
First aid	Cash handling
Management	Food safety and sanitation
Cleanliness	Quality management systems

Data Lens Summary

- Job postings increased by 1550% between January 2021 and January 2023, showing a large increase in recruitment activity post-Covid.
- Frontline occupations commanded higher advertised salaries which may indicate employers' recognition and valuing of the specialised skills required by these roles.
- The sector has seen an increase in the number and diversity of skills required by employers to ensure facilities are adaptable to the changing nature of the sector.

Board members

Rich Millard

Chair of Moving Communities

An experienced sport and physical activity director with a public, private and third sector background.

Richard Boardman

Head of Research and Development at Sport and Recreation Alliance

An independent representative body for grassroots community sport and recreation in the UK.

Adam Blaze

CEO of Activity Alliance

The national charity for disabled people in sport and activity.

Debbie Johns

Head of Performance Networks at Association for Public Service Excellence

A not-for-profit unincorporated association working with over 300 councils promoting excellence in frontline public services.

Dr Matthew Wade

Head of Research and Development at ukactive

A not-for-profit industry association for commercial gyms, independent operators and community leisure centres.

Samantha Ramanah

Adviser at the Local Government Association

The national membership body for local authorities in England and Wales.

Jason Stanton

CEO of My Time Active, representing Community Leisure UK

The members' association representing charitable leisure and culture trusts across England, Scotland, and Wales.

Penny Greenwood-Pearsons

Executive Officer at CLOA (Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association)

The professional association for strategic leaders in public sector cultural and leisure services.

Tara Dillon

CEO of CIMSPA (Chartered institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity)

The Chartered Institute for Management in Sport and Physical Activity, the professional development body for the UK's sport and physical activity sector.

Kevin Mills

Director of Place Development at Sport England

An arms-length body under the Department for Culture, Media and Sport responsible for growing and developing grassroots sport and getting more people active across England.

Nigel Harrison

CEO of Yorkshire Sport Foundation, representing the Active Partnership Network

A network of 43 Active Partnerships which are locally-led, non-profit, strategic organisations, bringing together people and organisations to increase physical activity levels.

Glossary

Facility types are defined as:

Term	Definition
Wet only	Only swimming pools are present on the site.
Small wet & dry	At least one swimming pool and up to three other facility types.
Large wet & dry	At least one swimming pool and four or more other facility types.
Small dry	Up to three facility types and no swimming pool.
Large dry	Four or more facility types and no swimming pool.

Management types are defined as:

Term	Definition
Local authority (in house)	Managed by local authority using their own staff.
Trust	Charitable Trust set up to run sports facilities. Some local authorities have set up leisure trusts to run their leisure centres. These Trusts benefit from charitable status and work outside the local authority structure. The local authority remains the owner of the facility.
Commercial management	Where the facility is managed by a commercial company, such as commercial health clubs. There are also Local Authority Facilities which have been contracted in to manage local authority leisure centres.
Small dry	Up to three facility types and no swimming pool.
Large dry	Four or more facility types and no swimming pool.

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August 2024