SPORT ENGLAND

Social Value Calculator

Guidance document for public leisure centres

Version 1.0 | May 2025

Authors

4GLOBAL

Manchester Metropolitan University

Sheffield Hallam University
Knowledge Applied

Moving Communities

Contributors

STATE OF LIFE

Contents

Introduction

Background and context

In 2023, Sport England commissioned a three-year project to create an updated model of the social value of sport and physical activity in England[1].

The new model was developed by a consortium of partners including State of Life, Sheffield Hallam University and Manchester Metropolitan University. It builds on previous Social Return on Investment (SROI) studies by Sheffield Hallam University for Sport England published in 2014 and 2020.

The current Sport England Strategy, Uniting the Movement[2] outlines the important role of sport and physical activity in improving the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities, tackling inequalities, environmental sustainability and rebuilding a stronger society for all. The new social value model uses the latest evidence and data to help Sport England and other organisations across the sector support the current strategy and advocate for the sector.

The previous Sport England SROI model reported the social value of sport and physical activity against four outcomes identified in the sport strategy of the previous UK Conservative Government[3]. These were physical and mental health, mental wellbeing, individual development and social and community development.

The updated social value model takes a slightly different approach, aligning where possible to the guidance provided by the HM Treasury Green Book[4]. The outcomes included in the updated model are categorised as: (a) primary value that pertains directly to the individual; and (b) secondary value to society, including the state.

This guide is intended for local authorities and leisure delivery partners (operators) with regard to their public leisure centres. If you have any further questions, please contact movingcommunities@4global.com

1 The social value of sport and physical activity in England
2 Uniting the Movement | Sport England
3 Get Active: a strategy for the future of sport and physical activity - GOV.UK
4 Green Book supplementary guidance: wellbeing - GOV.UK

The Social Value Calculator (SVC)

The Social Value Calculator (SVC) was originally developed in 2015 by 4GLOBAL, in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University and Experian.

Built on Sport England's previous social return of investment model of sport and physical activity, the tool was designed to monetise the social impact of participation in sport and physical activity at leisure facilities. From the outset, its core objective has been to provide leisure operators, local authorities, national funding bodies, and wider sector stakeholders with a robust, consistent, and evidence-based framework to measure, value, and benchmark the social return on investment in sport and physical activity.

The SVC is fully embedded within the DataHub — the UK's largest repository of sport and leisure data — through integrations with leisure management systems and other data capture tools. These integrations enable the SVC to process live participation data from leisure centres, applying national modelling standards to generate detailed, dynamic, and location-specific social value reporting.

Since its launch, the SVC has undergone several key iterations. SVC2 (2018) introduced updated research and refined modelling from Sheffield Hallam University. SVC3 (2021) delivered further methodological improvements and was integrated into Sport England's Moving Communities platform, enabling Active Partnerships, Local Authorities, and Operators to access their social value figures alongside participation and finance data within a unified dashboard.

SVC4, the fourth and latest version of the Social Value Calculator released in 2025, is based on the updated national model developed by State of Life, Sheffield Hallam University, and Manchester Metropolitan University, published in October 2024. With its DataHub integration, SVC4 allows operators to analyse their social value impact across a wide range of variables — including region, demographics, membership type, sport, and time period. It also provides in-depth drilldowns into activity levels and participation profiles, enabling stakeholders to better understand and influence how increases in active and fairly active participation translate into greater social value generation.

SVC4 is accessed via 4GLOBAL's DataHub platform by leisure centre operators on a licence basis, providing a more detailed, interactive, and operationally focused analysis compared to the Moving Communities Social Value Dashboard.

The Moving Communities Social Value Dashboard

Sport England's Moving Communities platform provides a real-time view of delivery across programmes, facilities, and local areas.

It is designed to support Active Partnerships, Local Authorities, delivery partners (including national governing bodies, system partners, and local organisations), and other key stakeholders by offering intelligence and actionable insights grounded in robust, quantifiable data.

The platform features dynamic filtering, benchmarking capabilities, and interactive mapping tools to help users better understand participation patterns and the broader impact of physical activity on local communities.

Moving Communities brings together data from a wide range of sources — including facility usage, participation levels, income and expenditure, utilities, customer experience, and service standards — into integrated dashboards and mapping tools. These visualisations support strategic decision-making and help drive local action to increase physical activity. Users can explore participation across different community segments and assess the resulting social value, all aligned to local priorities and strategic objectives.

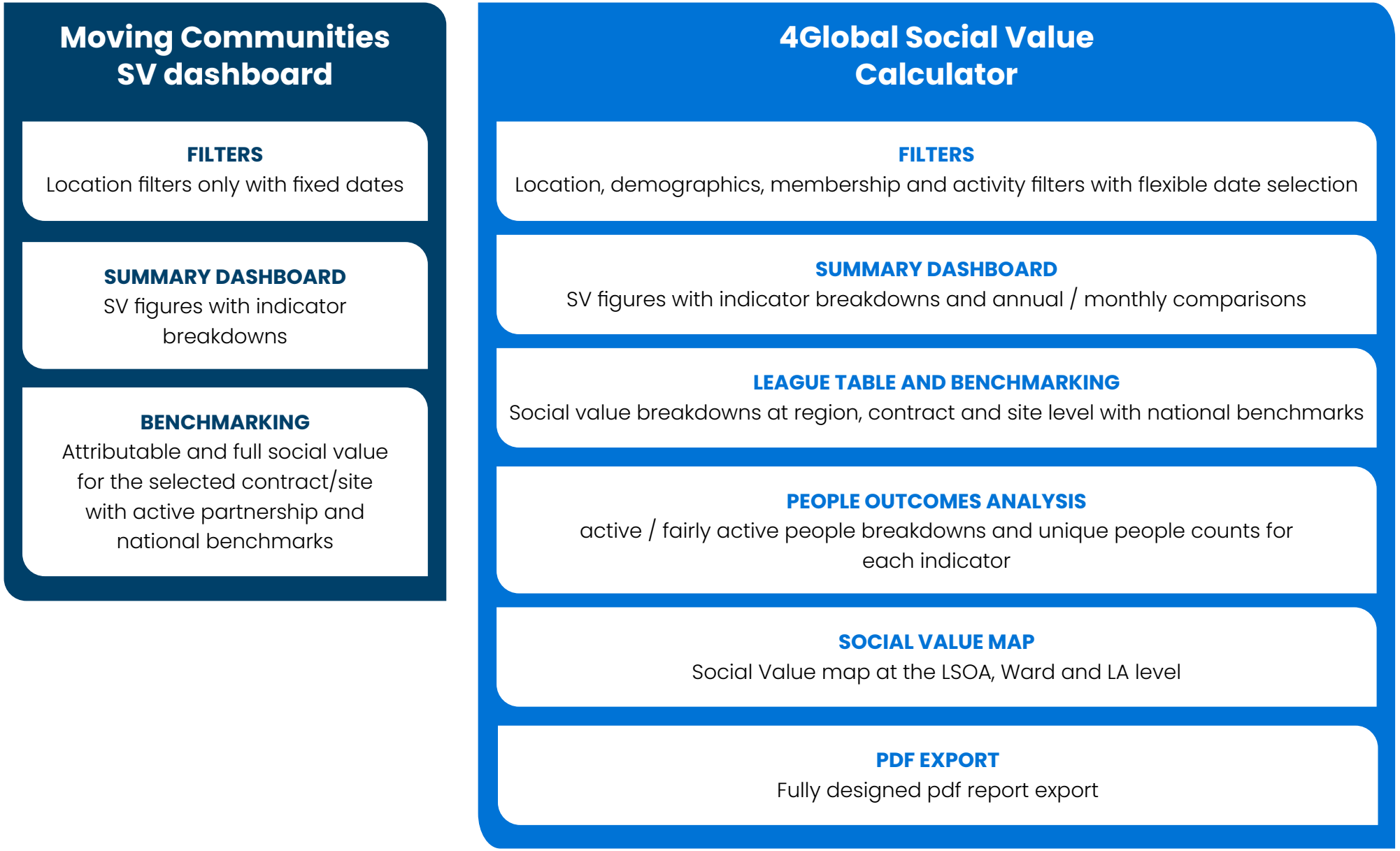
One of the core insight dashboards within the platform is the Social Value Dashboard, which is powered by the SVC4 model. It gives Active Partnerships, Local Authorities, and Operators free access to 12-month rolling summaries of social value generation, with breakdowns by outcome area and sub outcomes.

The Moving Communities Social Value Dashboard includes four layers of social value estimates:

- **National Social Value of Sport and Physical Activity**: This layer represents the overall social value generated from physical activity at the national level, excluding volunteering. It provides a refreshed and up-to-date view of the individual and societal benefits of physical activity across the country, based on Sport England's new model. It is important to note that the value of volunteering is excluded from the values in the dashboard.
- **Local Area Breakdowns**: This layer focuses on the estimated social value generated within specific Active Partnerships, based on the total number of active and fairly active individuals in their jurisdiction. The value is derived as a localised share of the national total, excluding volunteering.
- **Leisure Centre Participants Full Social Value**: This layer estimates the total social value generated by leisure centre participants through their overall physical activity, including both activities undertaken in leisure centres and elsewhere in the wider community.
- **Leisure Centre Attributable Social Value**: This layer identifies the proportion of social value directly attributable to activities that occur within leisure centres. It is calculated by isolating the value generated from participation within centres as a subset of participants' total activity.

Although both the 4GLOBAL Social Value Calculator and the Moving Communities Social Value Dashboard are powered by the same national social value of sport and physical activity model developed for Sport England, and both use participation data collected from leisure centres via the DataHub, the two tools provide different levels of insight and reporting capabilities. The key differences in the insights and KPIs available through each platform are summarised in the following diagram on page 8.

Figure 1 – Differences between Moving Communities Social Value Dashboard and 4GLOBAL Social Value Calculator



Methodology

This iteration of the SVC (SVC4) is aligned with the updated national model of the social value of sport and physical activity in England published by Sport England in 2024[5] which differentiates between primary values to the individual through improved wellbeing and secondary values to society in terms of healthcare and wider cost savings. The updated national model has prioritised wellbeing and health values as they are outcomes with the highest-quality evidence and capture some of the most significant benefits sport and physical activity generates for individuals and society. As a consequence, the scope of the new model is narrow but of a higher level of rigour than previous iterations.

5 Social Value of Physical Activity Summary Report

Outcomes

The full list of outcomes valued in the tool is presented below.

Figure 2 – Outcomes included in the Social Value Calculator from the Sport England Social Value of Sport and Physical Activity Model. Please note Sport England model also includes the wellbeing value of adult volunteering which is excluded from the Social Value Calculator.

Outcome	Description
Primary Value (Individual Wellbeing)	
Adult Wellbeing	Improved life satisfaction (adult participants 16+)
Children Wellbeing	Improved life satisfaction (child participants 11-16)
Secondary Value (Physical and Mental Health)	
CHD	Reduced risk (adult participants 16+)
Stroke	Reduced risk (adult participants 16+)
Breast cancer	Reduced risk (female participants 16+)
Endometrial (Uterus) Cancer	Reduced risk (female participants 16+)

Outcome	Description
Secondary Value (Physical and Mental Health)	
Colon cancer	Reduced risk (adult participants 16+)
Bladder Cancer	Reduced risk (adult participants 16+)
Oesophageal Cancer	Reduced risk (adult participants 16+)
Gastric cancer	Reduced risk (adult participants 16+)
Renal cancer	Reduced risk (adult participants 16+)
Type 2 diabetes	Reduced risk (adult participants 16+)
Hip fractures	Reduced risk (adult participants 65+)
Back pain	Reduced risk (adult participants 16+)
Dementia	Reduced risk (adult participants 65+)
Depression	Reduced risk (adult participants 16+)
Medical service usage	Reduced GP visits (adult participants 16+)
Mental health services usage	Reduced mental health service usage (adult participants 16+)
Injuries	Increased risk (adult participants 16+) – this is a negative value in the model

Valuation

Sport England's updated national model provides annual per-participant values for wellbeing and health outcomes.

In the SVC, these are converted into monthly per-participant figures for model application at the local level and then aggregated to annual totals using integrated participation data.

Primary value (Individual Wellbeing):

- This outcome was calculated by multiplying the value of the increase in life satisfaction associated with sport and physical activity participation (using the guidance on wellbeing valuation approach) by the number of adults (aged 16+) and children (aged 11-16) meeting a specific threshold of participation.
- The wellbeing valuation approach uses large scale survey data to estimate the effect of different physical activity thresholds on people's self-reported life satisfaction, which is then converted to a monetary value of enhanced wellbeing using guidance issued by HM Treasury[6].

6 HM Treasury Guidance Document

Secondary value (Physical and Mental Health):

- 14 health outcomes (reduced risk of various health conditions) were valued by estimating the number of reduced cases resulting from participation in sport and physical activity multiplied by the associated average annual direct (healthcare) and indirect (social and informal care) cost per case for each health outcome.
- Reduced GP visits & mental health service usage were valued by multiplying the number of physically active adults by the associated average annual cost savings per sport and physical activity participant due to reduced use of these services.
- Injuries were valued by multiplying the number of A&E attendances recorded as sport injuries by the average annual cost of an injury. Injuries are treated differently than the other health outcomes, recognising they have a negative impact on the total social value.

Assumptions

Thresholds and Duration of Activity:

- For adults (aged 16+), social value related to health and wellbeing is generated by individuals classified as either 'active' (engaging in 150+ minutes of moderate intensity equivalent activity per week) or 'fairly active' (30–149 minutes per week). For fairly active adults, a linear dose-response relationship is assumed between activity levels and the reduced risk of developing various health conditions.
- For children (aged 11–16), social value — limited to wellbeing — is generated for those who are classified as 'active' (an average of at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day) or 'fairly active' (an average of 30–59 minutes per day).
- The activity duration thresholds used to determine social value generation for both adults and children within leisure centre environments are adjusted using the assumptions around in-facility versus out-of-facility participation, and multi-centre usage — as detailed in the following sections.
- Where specific activity duration data is unavailable, average durations derived from DataHub participation records are used to calculate active minutes.

In-Facility Participation:

- In-facility deflators are applied to adjust social value figures per outcome (on a per-participant basis), accounting for the estimated proportion of activity that takes place outside of leisure centre environments.
- These deflators are also used to adjust the activity duration thresholds required within a facility to categorise participants as active or fairly active.
- The proportion of activity occurring in facilities is estimated using data from Sport England's Active Lives Survey. These estimates are then applied as in-facility deflators in the SVC model.

Multi-Centre Usage:

- A monthly deflator for multi-centre usage is calculated using DataHub data to adjust for individuals who participate at more than one leisure centre of the same operator.
- This deflator is applied to both the social value estimates per outcome and to the activity duration thresholds, ensuring that the calculation of active and fairly active participants reflects activity within a single facility environment.

Model application

The figure to the right summarises the approach for the application of Sport England's national social value of sport and physical activity model using the participation data collected from the leisure centres in the DataHub.

The model application is broken down into two parts, which contribute to the total social value generated by the centre.

Member
(known users)

Casuals
(unknown users)

INPUTS

- Participation data for members (Member ID with age, gender and duration of activity)
- Participation data for casuals (No Member ID and/or age, gender missing)

ANALYSIS

- Activity and demographic segmentation for each member
- Application of social value model on participation data (Physical and mental health / individual wellbeing)
- Total social value generated by members
- Total social value generated by casuals

OUTPUTS

- Total social value generated by the leisure centre participants (e.g. £4m social value generated in total over a year)
- Total social value attributable to each leisure centre, (e.g. £1m social value generated in total over a year)

Members (known users)

Members are defined as facility users with an active subscription (paid or unpaid) to use the facility.

Members have a unique identifying number (member ID) and demographic (age, gender) information in the DataHub integrated with the leisure management systems.

For the calculation of the Social Value for the members of a facility, the following steps are taken:

Step 1: Activity classification

Each member is assigned an activity status (active, fairly active or inactive) based on their total duration of activity within a facility, which contributes to their overall physical activity levels.

For these duration calculations, data from the leisure management systems is used wherever available. Where direct data is missing, a proxy duration is assigned based on the type of activity booked using the sector wide averages derived from the DataHub.

The physical activity threshold defined by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) guidelines have been adapted in SVC4 by applying the assumptions from the Active Lives Survey and the Datahub. These take into account participation occurring inside and outside facilities, as well as activity spread across multiple venues in the same month - the two deflators explained in the Assumption sections above. The resulting Monthly In-Facility Threshold are then used to determine each member's activity classification.

Figure 4 - Activity classification (CMO guidelines and SVC4 thresholds) based on in-facility minutes per month.

Adults	CMO Guidelines (Weekly)	Social Value Thresholds (Monthly – In Facility)
Active	150+ minutes per week	162+ minutes per month
Fairly Active	30-149 minutes per week	32-161 minutes per month
Inactive	<30 minutes per week	<32 minutes per month
Children	**CMO Guidelines (Daily)**	**Social Value Thresholds (Monthly – In Facility)**
Active	An average of at least 60+ minutes per day	648+ minutes per month
Fairly Active	An average of 30-59 minutes per day	324-647 minutes per month
Less Active	Less than an average of 30 minutes per day	<324 minutes per month

Step 2: Demographic classification

Each member is classified in a demographic segment based on their age and gender, which are key criteria for the risk reduction in health outcomes and enhanced wellbeing – e.g. breast cancer is only relevant for female participants, hip fractures relate to 65+ year old participants and wellbeing values differ among adults and children.

Step 3: Social Value calculation for each participant

Based on the activity classification and demographic segment calculated in Steps 1-2 linked with Sport England's national social value of sport and physical activity model for sport and physical activity, the social value generated for each member is calculated for the health and wellbeing outcomes. This calculation provides the Full Social Value generated by the member inside and outside the facility as a combined value.

Step 4: Application of deflators

Two deflators are applied within the Social Value calculations in order to:

- account for sport and physical activity participation occurring inside and outside the facility. This is applied by multiplying the SV generated by the proportion of activity occurring inside the facility for active and fairly active users based on the data from the Active Lives Survey.
- prevent double counting of the value generated by an individual user visiting multiple facilities within the same month. This is applied by multiplying the Social Value generated with the average multi-site usage deflator percentage, calculated using DataHub data.

This approach enables the Social Value Calculator to estimate the Social Value attributable to the leisure centre participation within the full social value generated for each individual.

Step 5: Social Value Calculation for each site

Once the individual social value is calculated for each member, it is summed up for all participants of the facility within the month to calculate the Social Value generated by the members that is attributable to the leisure centre for that month, which is defined as the proportion of the total social value generated by an active or fairly active person that is specifically attributable to their activity within the leisure centre.

A member contributes to the Social Value Calculator only if they are aged 11+ and meet the minimum activity thresholds within the leisure centre. No assumptions are made about their activity levels during months when they do not attend the centre.

A member can be 'active' in a particular month and 'fairly active' in another month based on his/her activity levels hence the total number of active and fairly active participants over 12 months can be higher than the total social value participants (i.e. unique people generating social value over the course of the year) reported in SVC4.

Casual (unknown users)

Casuals are all facility users without an active subscription using the facility to do physical activity occasionally or regularly.

The information about these users is limited compared to members as they do not have a unique identifier to track frequency of visit and no demographic and postcode information is recorded about these users in most cases. All participants using the facility through a school, club or corporate booking (e.g. club swimming, corporate basketball sessions, etc.) or attending an activity booked by a member (e.g. 5-a-side football, badminton court booking for 4 players, etc.) are captured in this group.

For the social value calculation of casual users of the facility in a month, the following approach is applied.

Step 1: Total casual throughput calculation

Total throughput from the casual users of the facility for the month is calculated using the DataHub extracts, including the throughput from casual bookings, the additional headcount from member bookings and member bookings with missing age and/or gender information.

Step 2: Throughput to unique user conversion

A ratio has been calculated through the leisure card, pay-as-you-go (PAYG) and free membership holders in the DataHub (those without a paid subscription, so with a similar proxy propensity to participate as casual users) and applied to the total monthly throughput from Step 1 in order to find out the unique user throughput from the total casual throughput.

- E.g.: 1,000 total casual throughput in a month is generated by the bookings of approx. 250 unique users.

Step 3: Unique users to social value participants conversion

Once the total number of unique user equivalent is calculated, these users are broken down into sub-segments of activity levels (i.e. active, fairly active and inactive users) using the ratios from the member calculations to calculate the number of people that are likely to have participated enough to meet the minimum thresholds to generate a social value.

- E.g.: 115 users (active adults and children - out of 250 unique users) are categorised as Active participants (150+ minutes per week), 85 users as Fairly Active participants (30-149 minutes per week) and 50 users as Inactive participants (less than 30 minutes per week) or participants who are ineligible to generate social value (i.e. 1-10 year olds).

Step 4: Total casual social value per site calculation

Once the estimated number of casual users contributing to the social value is calculated, the weighted average individual social value generated by a member in the sector in a given month has been multiplied with this number in order to calculate the total social value generated by casual participation for that site.

- E.g. If the average individual social value generated in health outcomes for 115 'active' participants in the sector in April 2024 is £100, then the total social value for 'active' casual participants of Site A calculated above would be £11,500 in that month.
- A similar calculation is done for 'fairly active' casual participants for health and wellbeing outcomes.

The deflators have been factored into the average social value calculations using the member side of the modelling so they are included into the casual social value calculations as well.

The adult/child and active/fairly active ratios as well as the average social value per member for each group, are dynamically calculated based on live participation data from the DataHub and the ongoing social value model application on members.

This value is then added to the Social Value generated by the members in the month to calculate the Total Social Value (full and attributable) to the leisure centre.

Step 5: Breakdown of casual social value into outcome areas

The total social value generated by casual users is then broken down into primary (individual wellbeing) and secondary values (physical and mental health) by applying the demographic segment breakdown of members of the same facility.

Comparing the results of SVC4 with previous SVC values

The results derived from SVC4 and the MC Social Value Dashboard are not directly comparable with values derived using previous iterations of the model due to several methodological and presentational differences:

- SVC4 includes additional health outcomes (different types of cancers)
- SVC4 excludes outcomes linked to individual development and social and community development.
- Updated participation, risk reduction, disease prevalence and cost data are used for valuing health outcomes.
- Wellbeing values are calculated using a different approach (WELLBY) for 'active' and 'fairly active' adults as well as children. Gender-specific wellbeing values are used for adults. In SVC3, wellbeing calculations were only done for adults (not children) and active people (not fairly active people).
- Multi-site deflators and in-facility deflators have been updated.
- Location and/or the socio-economic profile of the participant is not a factor in health valuation in the new model.
- Health and wellbeing values are reported at 2023 prices.
- SVC4 reports on leisure centre participants total social value as well as the leisure centre attributable value.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Active (adult)	Taking part in moderate intensity equivalent physical activity for at least 150 minutes per week
Active (CYP)	Doing an average of 60+ minutes of physical activity in a day
Attributable (net) social value	The proportion of social value directly attributable to activities that occur within leisure centres
CYP	Children and Young People
Direct costs	Medical costs associated with treatment and management of disease e.g. NHS costs
Fairly active (adult)	Taking part in moderate intensity equivalent physical activity for 30-<150 minutes per week
Fairly active (CYP)	Doing an average of 30-59 minutes of physical activity a day
Full (gross) social value	The total social value generated by leisure centre participants through their overall physical activity, including activities undertaken inside and outside of leisure centres
Inactive (adult)	Doing <30 minutes of moderate intensity equivalent physical activity per week
Less active (CYP)	Doing less than an average of 30 minutes of activity a day
Indirect costs	Non-medical costs related to health care including social care, informal care
Moderate intensity activity	Moderate activity is defined as where you raise your breathing rate

Term	Definition
Moderate intensity equivalent	The number of minutes of physical activity is calculated based on 'moderate intensity equivalent' minutes, where vigorous intensity exercise counts as double
MVPA	Moderate or vigorous intensity physical activity
NCD	Non-communicable diseases that are not spread through infection or through other people. Typically related to unhealthy behaviours
Primary value	Direct benefits to individuals through improved wellbeing
Secondary value	Wider value to society, including the state
Vigorous intensity activity	Vigorous activity is where you are out of breath or are sweating

Social Value Models – Comparison Summary

This table provides a summary of the key characteristics of five social value models and methods recognised in the public leisure sector. This table can be used to support conversations with wider partners on the use of each model. Sport England advocates for the use of the social value calculator in Moving Communities as the baseline tool for estimating the social value of sport and physical activity undertaken in public leisure facilities.

Model / method	Who developed it?	Key info / how the model works	Data sources	Underlying methodology/ies	Free to end user?	Differentiate by demographic factors?	Monetisation of outcomes?	Wellbeing Valuation element	WV method	Valuation in line with 2021 HMT Guidance (using the WELLBY)	Include secondary benefits i.e. value to the public purse
Current Sport England model	State of Life, SHU, MMU	Estimates the social value of sport and physical activity participation in England based on analysis of national data sets and wellbeing valuation using the WELLBY. These are presented as per person values, and aggregated up to regional and national levels.	Active Lives and secondary health literature	Wellbeing valuation (WELLBY 2023), secondary health valuation	✓	By age, gender, health status / disability, ethnicity, characteristics of inequality	✓	✓	WELLBY (2023)	✓	✓
Moving Communities	Moving Communities	A tool to value the impact of gyms and leisure facilities for local authorities and policymakers with SE's social value model at the core.	Based on usage data collected by individual leisure and then applied to wellbeing and health values taken from SE's social value model	Wellbeing valuation (WELLBY 2023), secondary health valuation	✓	By age and gender	✓	✓	WELLBY (2023)	✓	✓

Model / method	Who developed it?	Key info / how the model works	Data sources	Underlying methodology/ ies	Free to end user?	Differentiate by demographic factors?	Moneti-sation of outcomes?	Wellbeing Valuation element	WV method	Valuation in line with 2021 HMT Guidance (using the WELLBY)	Include secondary benefits i.e. value to the public purse
HACT - UK Social Value Bank	HACT	Estimates the social value of a wide range of individual-level outcomes using national data sets and wellbeing valuation. Includes community investment type outcomes and built environment	USoc, Taking Part, Crime Survey for England and Wales	Wellbeing Valuation (WELLBY 2021)	✗	✗	✓	✓	WELLBY (2021)	✓	✓
MOVES	UEA	MOVES provides a cost-utility and cost-effectiveness analysis that considers the ratio between the costs of the intervention and the financial value of associated related health outcomes.	Secondary health literature, data and values	Cost-utility and cost-effectiveness analysis using QALYs and DALYs	✓	By age and gender	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
TOMS	Social Value Portal	A measurement framework originally designed for use in procurement for construction and planning but now used by some local authorities.	Various	Various	✗	✗	✓	✗	Wellbeing valued as input costs or increased productivity etc.	✗	✓
Sport Social Value Bank	Simetrica-Jacobs	User guide shared through request	Various	Wellbeing Valuation	✗	Adult and Youth	✓	✓	Income equivalence (Fujiwara 2013)	✗	For some outcomes

Contact details

For any further questions or information requests related to the Social Value Calculator tool or the academic research underpinning the methodology you can contact us at **support@datahubclub.com**.

Sport England
SportPark
3 Oakwood Drive
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 3QF

sportengland.org

May 2025