

# **School Games Organiser Network Review**

## **Objective A – Impact and Value for Money**

### **Summary of findings**

**July 2025**

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## **Executive summary**

This report outlines the headline findings from ‘Objective A – Impact and Value for Money’ of the School Games Organiser Network Review. The aim of Objective A was to assess “the intended and actual (additional) impact of the School Games Organiser (SGO) Network, and what observable contribution is attributable to the direct/in-direct action of the SGO Network”.

### **Methods**

The Impact analysis included primary research with key stakeholder groups, including:

- 1,678 schools.
- 323 School Games Organisers.
- 43 Active Partnerships.
- 49 National Governing Bodies of Sport and national partners.

These consultations were supplemented by secondary analysis of existing data, through the School Games Mark Award application database for 2023/24.

The Value for Money assessment applied a cost benefit analysis to evaluate whether the benefits generated by the SGO Network justified its associated costs. This involved linking Active Lives Children and Young People survey data with the School Games Mark Award administrative dataset, which identifies schools participating in SGO Network activities. To determine the impact, multivariate regression analysis was conducted to assess whether attending a school with a School Games Mark Award is statistically associated with improvements in key outcome indicators.

### **Context**

The School Games programme was launched in the 2011–2012 academic year as part of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic legacy. It replaced the School Sport Partnerships (SSP) infrastructure, with 450 School Games

Organisers (SGOs) established to cover the same geographical footprint previously held by 450 Partnership Development Managers.

The SGO Network is jointly funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). Sport England, via National Lottery funding, invests in the Youth Sport Trust (YST) as the national delivery partner. Each SGO is funded to work three days per week, with central funding of £23,800 per post, paid to the designated host organisation.

Initially, the programme placed a strong emphasis on formal competition and performance indicators. Over the past 12 years, however, the School Games has evolved into a more holistic offer, now structured around delivering five core outcomes (see Appendix 1).

Since 2010, the School Games programme has created 13.4 million participation opportunities for young people, with 97% of schools in England eligible to take part.

## **Headline findings**

### **Impact**

Schools reported consistent themes around the positive impact the SGO Network has had on children and young people, including:

- ❖ 93% report their SGO has a positive impact on their least active young people.
- ❖ 89% report their SGO has a positive impact strategically (funding, policy, curriculum).
- ❖ 94% report their SGO has a positive impact providing equal opportunities.
- ❖ 74% report their SGO provides a balanced mix of competitive and participation-based opportunities.
- ❖ 71% of schools report their SGO has helped to develop new partnerships for their school (clubs, coaches, facilities, community).

- ❖ 88% of schools report that if their SGO was no longer available as they are now, their sport and physical activity offer would reduce.
- ❖ On average, 63% of an SGO's time is allocated to primary, 24% to secondary, 10% to Special Schools, 4% to Alternative Provision and 3% 'Other' (e.g., infant/middle).
- ❖ 78% of schools report they have contact with their SGO "at least fortnightly".
- ❖ Schools in the most deprived catchment areas demonstrate the highest application 'efficiency' for School Games Mark, with 48% of schools where 91-100% of their pupils live in the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods applying for an award. This analysis highlights the crucial role SGOs play in supporting some of the most underserved young people.

### **Value for money**

- ❖ There is evidence to suggest that the cost of the SGO Network is justified by the benefits produced. It is estimated that the SGO Network, costing £37.0 million to deliver to secondary school aged children over 11 years, yielded £91.7 million in benefits.
- ❖ This implied a benefit cost ratio of 2.48, suggesting that every £1 spent yielded £2.48 in benefits. It should be noted that this excludes both the costs and benefits to children in school years 3 to 6 (ages 7 to 11), from the wellbeing analysis, due to limitations and uncertainties in applying WELLBY values to the under 11s.
- ❖ The sensitivity analysis indicates that including children in school years 3 to 6 (ages 7 to 11) could yield £237.4 million in benefits, enough to offset total SGO Network costs of £154 million (equivalent to a benefit cost ratio of 1.54).
- ❖ Individuals attending a school that were awarded a Platinum School Games Mark Award are 3.1% more likely to undertake 420 minutes of exercise (both inside and outside of school), per week, compared to individuals attending schools which were not awarded an award, statistically significant at the 99% confidence level.

- ❖ Individuals attending a school with a Platinum School Games Mark Award are 2.2% more likely to have volunteered at least once in the last 12-months compared to those schools that were not awarded an award, statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

The Impact and Value for Money analysis clearly demonstrated the critical role of the SGO Network. Schools and stakeholders highly value SGOs' contributions to achieving the five School Games Outcomes and supporting teacher development through continued professional development and sustained, long-term relationships. The programme's evolution toward a more inclusive and accessible model has significantly broadened participation, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and there is an increasing focus on mental health and tailored support for the least active.

The Review identified several key challenges affecting the SGO Network, including static funding levels, limited capacity due to the three-day-a-week role, and significant variation in school numbers and geographic coverage per SGO. These factors contribute to inconsistencies in the local offer and, in some cases, have led host sites to withdraw from their hosting role. Stakeholders also raised concerns about variability in SGO performance, accountability, and a lack of clarity around the role's purpose and scope.

Despite these challenges, there is strong consensus around the value of maintaining a collaborative school sport network – one that continues to connect national strategies with local communities and prioritises engagement of underserved and less active young people.

## Section 1: Introduction

This report outlines the headline findings from ‘Objective A – Impact and Value for Money’ for the School Games Organiser Network Review. The aim of Objective A was to assess “the intended and actual (additional) impact of the School Games Organiser (SGO) Network, and what observable contribution is attributable to the direct/in-direct action of the SGO Network”.

Objective A covered the following five considerations:

- 1) The extent to which the activities of the SGO Network are contributing to the five School Games outcomes today.
- 2) The extent to which the SGO Network is serving the variety of school settings including primary, secondary, special schools and pupil referral units.
- 3) The extent to which the SGO Network is adopting the emphasis of getting the least active more active and sustaining participation and increasing/sustaining overall school engagement in after-school sport.
- 4) What observable contributions is the SGO Network making to wider outcomes such as the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people and the UK Chief Medical Officers’ Guidelines.
- 5) What other observable benefits have been realised by the SGO Network. Examples of this may be, but not limited to, the extent to which the SGO Network levers wider commitment from schools to support sport, physical activity, and health outcomes and the role of this network in delivering the outcomes of other Government investments such as Opening School Facilities, Holiday Activities and Food Programme, and the PE and Sport Premium.

## Section 2: Methods and sample

**Impact:** The methods used to capture the impact of the SGO Network included primary research with key stakeholder groups, supplemented by secondary analysis of existing data, through the School Games Mark Award application database for 2023–24. Figure 1 outlines the stakeholders included and the methods used to consult with that group, and the sample.

**Figure 1: Sample and method overview**

Group	Method	Responses (N)
School Games Organisers	Survey	323
	Follow-up interviews	26
	Follow-up focus groups	24
SGO Host Sites	Survey	84
Schools	Survey	1,678
	Interviews with PE Lead/Head of Dept. or teacher of PE (via School Games Mark process)	244
	Secondary analysis of School Games Mark applications (2023/24)	9,024
	Secondary analysis of Platinum School Games Mark applications (2023/24)	1,508
Active Partnerships	Interviews	43
National Governing Bodies / National Disability Sports Organisations	Focus groups / interviews	35
National Partners*	Interviews	14 people (from 8 organisations)

\* Sport England, Youth Sport Trust, Leadership Skills Foundation, British Olympic Association (Team GB), Street Games, Intelligent Health, London Youth Games, Active Partnerships National Organisation

The majority of responses for the school survey were from primary schools (77%), followed by secondary (14%), special schools (3%) and other (5%). To complement the school survey, interviews with all schools selected as part of the School Games Mark Award external validation took place (n=244), plus secondary analysis of the 2023/24 School Games Mark Award



application database (n=9,024) and Platinum case study submissions (n=1,508).

**Value for Money:** The Review used a cost benefit analysis (CBA) to explore the extent to which the benefits of the SGO Network justified the costs. Active Lives Children and Young Peoples data was linked to the School Games Mark Award administrative data, which identifies the schools that participate in SGO Network activities. Active Lives data was used as it represents the largest and best data source that captures activity levels, non-cognitive outcome measures and subjective wellbeing data. It can also be linked to the School Games Mark Award data to identify the individuals attending relevant schools, enabling regression analysis.

The School Games Mark Award was used as a treatment group as it identifies schools which consistently engaged with the SGO Network. This allowed for comparisons between individuals attending schools awarded the School Games Mark Award at Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum level, and individuals attending schools who did not have an Award to assess the funding received through the School Games Network, the delivery of active minutes, and a range of wellbeing measures.

Multivariate regression analysis was used to explore whether there is a statistical relationship between an individual attending a school with a School Games Mark Award and the outcome indicators used. Within the regression models, four binary variables are used as the 'treatment' variables: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. These "treatment variables" are binary indicators of whether the school had been awarded either a Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum School Games Mark Award, or whether they were not awarded an award at all. This allows the statistical association between outcomes and the level of the School Games Mark awarded to be compared against a reference group of schools (a 'control' group) which do not have a School Games Mark Award.

Outcome indicators can all be monetised by estimating the statistical relationship between the benefit and the change in an individual's subjective wellbeing. However, it is important to note that given the information available in the Active Lives Children and Young Peoples data, there are some benefits which cannot be estimated in the context of this evaluation and therefore omitted from the CBA. These include (i) improved physical health, (ii) increased participation in leadership experience and social action (volunteering) outside of sports, (iii) educational earnings premia, and (iv) NHS future cost savings thorough increased levels of physical activity. Two wellbeing valuation approaches were used for this CBA:

- Wellbeing valuation for children in school years 7 to 13: The Active Lives Children and Young Person data asks students the ONS4 standard questions for personal wellbeing. This includes the life satisfaction question (on a 0-10 scale) which is the primary question used HM Treasury Green Book wellbeing valuation: Life satisfaction variable: *"Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?"*

By understanding the importance of each outcome indicators in terms of the effect on life satisfaction (of secondary school aged children) a monetary value can be assigned which can be used for the purposes of economic appraisal. Following HM Treasury Green Book Supplementary Guidance on wellbeing in policy appraisal, a point increase in life satisfaction is valued at £15,369 (£11,822 - £18,915) in 2023/24 prices, this is referred to as a WELLBY. Life satisfaction is only measured in the Active Lives Children data from Year 7.

- Wellbeing valuation for children in school years 3 to 6: Within the Active Lives Children and Young People data, those in years 3 to 6 are not asked about life satisfaction, rather asked about happiness (also an ONS4 standard question for personal wellbeing measured on a 0 to 10 scale):
  - Happiness variable: *"Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?"*

Recent work in the child wellbeing space indicates that the effects of physical activity on both life satisfaction in secondary school and happiness in primary school are broadly similar. However, these values are not yet recommended for use in CBA, and as such are used within the sensitivity analysis to convey what the likely monetary impacts could be.

For context, data from the School Games Mark Award was used for both the Impact and Value for Money elements of the Review process for Objective A. The School Games Mark was launched in 2012 and, in 2023/24, focused on the principles of the five School Games Outcomes, encouraging schools to demonstrate meaningful engagement with their local SGO. However, not all SGOs engage with the School Games Mark to the same extent, leading to some inconsistency across the Network. In 2023/24, 9,024 schools applied for School Games Mark, with 78% achieving either a Platinum (20%) or Gold (58%) Award.

### Section 3: Context

The School Games programme was launched in the 2011 – 2012 academic year, linked to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Legacy. There are 450 School Games Organisers (SGOs) whose individual geographical footprint (number of schools) is based on the old footprint of 450 Partnership Development Managers, who led School Sport Partnerships (SSP). SGOs came into place in 2011 and replaced the SSP infrastructure.

It is reported that, since 2010, the School Games programme has offered 13.4 million participation opportunities for young people<sup>1</sup>. In the last two academic years, the School Games Network in 2022/23 ran 26,051 events involving 2,290,254 young people, and in 2023/24 this rose very slightly to 26,057 events completed, involving 2,320,376 young people. 97% of all schools in England are eligible to take part in School Games, and 84% (19,930) of these have registered to take part in the School Games.

Initially, the programme focused heavily on formal competition structures, with a strong emphasis on key performance indicators. Schools and SGOs were primarily tasked with reporting metrics such as participant numbers, student leaders involved, club links established, and the quantity of events and competitions held each year. Move forward approximately 12 years and School Games has developed into a more holistic approach positioned around delivering five Outcomes (see Appendix 1). The programme has undergone a purposeful shift to better reach and support young people who face the greatest barriers to being active (girls, disabled young people, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and individuals from low socio-economic groups).

The SGO Network is funded by the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS), and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). Sport England invest in the Youth Sport Trust (YST) via National Lottery funding to be the national delivery partner for the SGO Network. SGOs are funded three-days-a-week, with central funding paid to the named host of

£23,800. This figure has remained static since 2011 and the operational circumstances of each SGO varies significantly.

The Review highlighted operational inconsistencies within the SGO Network, revealing that 66% of SGOs work full-time, though this full-time commitment varies in structure. Some SGOs spend two days a week teaching in schools, while others rely on a buy-in model to fund their roles across the remaining days. SGOs who are funded for five days, or who receive additional support through a School Sport Partnership (SSP) or who have retained a version of the former Partnership Development Manager model, are often better positioned to align their work with the more strategic School Games Outcomes, as they can delegate some delivery responsibilities. As a result, one of the most pressing challenges is the limited capacity of SGOs, many of whom are employed for three-days-a-week. This significantly restricts their ability to contribute to and deliver on wider strategic objectives and often leads to variation in the local offer between neighbouring SGO areas, depending on available time, resources, and support.

The historic set-up of the SGO Network on the previous SSP footprint also resulted in operational variations across the network. There are significant differences in the number of schools per SGO, ranging from 19 schools in one SGO area to 121 in another, with an average of 53 per SGO. Six SGOs have over 100 schools and the allocation does not account for the number of pupils in each SGO area. The geographical coverage of SGOs is also hugely variable with some areas covering a 40-mile radius, and others, a 10-mile radius with two or three SGOs. This leads to a significant disparity in the “ask” of an SGO to meet the needs of their catchment logistically and equitably when the funds per SGO is currently the same, regardless of their context. The SGO with 19 schools is working with a hypothetical budget of £1,253 per school, and the SGO with 121 is working with £197 per school. Unlike the SSP footprint, which included a set revenue budget per school that was consistent.

Furthermore, levels of additional funding vary across the SGO Network with over three-quarters of SGOs securing less than £30,000 in additional funding, with 36% securing nothing at all. A small proportion (7%) draw in over £100,000, with the highest reported amount being £350,000. This wide variation in funding highlights significant inconsistencies across the SGO Network in terms of what each SGO is able to achieve at a local level. Some SGOs also acknowledged that the lack of a dedicated delivery budget can significantly impact their ability to address accessibility and inclusivity. For example, limited funding restricts their capacity to subsidise transport costs or provide essential equipment, which can act as barriers to participation for some schools and young people.

The Review also noted the differences in host site arrangements, including schools (primary, secondary, and special), Active Partnerships, councils, and community interest companies. Support from host sites presents a generally positive picture, with 62% of SGOs reporting they feel supported 'very much so', 22% to a 'moderate extent', 13% to a 'smaller extent' and 3% 'not at all' supported. However, SGOs working a three-day-a-week role were less likely to report feeling strongly supported by their host site, compared to those who's funding is topped up to a five-day role. Furthermore, SGOs who have been in post for ten years or more are more likely to cite strong support from their host site,

Host sites reported that despite the recognised benefits of hosting an SGO, the current funding levels are insufficient, short-term, and often require supplementary financial support from the host. Furthermore, the static nature of the funding and that it has not been adjusted for inflation, exacerbates this issue and is leading to some sites relinquishing their hosting responsibilities. The static financial model also creates recruitment and retention issues for the SGO Network.

In addition to these funding challenges, feedback from SGOs, national partners, Active Partnerships, and host sites themselves highlighted a

persistent lack of clarity around the purpose and scope of the SGO role, particularly whether it should be primarily strategic or operational. This ambiguity has led to SGOs often becoming "all things to all people" within their local areas, responding to a wide range of expectations. The skill set required for the role is now broad and complex, yet there is significant variation in experience and length of service across the Network. This has created a mismatch between the skills currently available and those now needed, especially as the School Games has evolved to focus on delivering the five Outcomes.

Despite these challenges, national partners, Active Partnerships and NGBs consistently recognised and praised the critical role the SGO Network plays in ensuring that school sport and physical activity maintains a strong national presence. SGOs have built long-standing and trusted relationships with schools and have demonstrated the ability to adapt quickly to change, though it was noted that the pace of adaptation varies across the Network. There were also some concerns around the variability in SGO performance and accountability, which can impact the strategic alignment and coherence of the School Games at a national level.

## Section 4: Headline findings

### Impact

- ❖ **93%** of schools reported their SGO has a **positive impact** on their **least active** young people.
- ❖ **88%** of schools reported that if their **SGO was no longer available** as they are now, their sport and physical activity **offer would reduce**.
- ❖ **71%** of schools report their **SGO helped develop new partnerships** for their school (e.g. clubs, coaches).
- ❖ **74%** of schools report their **SGO provides a balanced mix of competitive and participation-based opportunities**.
- ❖ The impact across the five School Games outcomes demonstrated that schools felt their SGO had a **‘positive’ or ‘very positive’ impact** across the five Outcomes, with Outcome 2: Clear intent and positive experiences (**96%**), Outcome 4: Personal development of young people (**86%**), Outcome 5: Advocacy and stakeholder management (**82%**), Outcome 1: CMO daily active minutes (**80%**), and Outcome 3: Secondary school engagement/transition (**70%**).
- ❖ **66%** of SGOs **work full-time**.
- ❖ The number of **schools each SGO is assigned is not consistent**, ranging from 19 to 121, **with an average of 53**. Six SGOs have over 100 schools. The SGO with 19 schools is working with a hypothetical budget of £1,253 per school, and the SGO with 121 is working with £197 per school.
- ❖ The **Network is not distributed equally** as there are significantly different geographical structures for SGO areas. Some cover a 40-mile radius, others might be city based with a 10-mile catchment and two or three SGOs.
- ❖ The skills required of an SGO are very varied, and the **experience and service length within the system varies significantly**.

### Value for Money

- ❖ There is evidence to suggest that the **cost of the SGO Network is justified by the benefits produced**. It is estimated that the SGO



Network, costing £37.0 million to deliver to secondary school aged children over 11 years, **yielded £91.7 million in benefits.**

- ❖ This implied a **benefit cost ratio of 2.48, suggesting that every £1 spent yielded £2.48 in benefits.**
- ❖ The sensitivity analysis indicates that including children in school years 3 to 6 (ages 7 to 11) could yield **£237.4 million in benefits, enough to offset total SGO Network costs of £154 million** (equivalent to a benefit cost ratio of 1.54).
- ❖ Individuals attending a school that were awarded a Platinum School Games Mark Award are **3.1% more likely to undertake 420 minutes of exercise** (both inside and outside of school), per week, compared to individuals attending schools which were not awarded an award, statistically significant at the 99% confidence level.
- ❖ Individuals attending a school with a Platinum School Games Mark Award are **2.2% more likely to have volunteered at least once in the last 12-months** compared to those schools that were not awarded an award, statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

## Section 5: Findings mapped against the five considerations of the SGO Network Review Tender Brief

### Consideration 1: The extent to which the activities of the SGO Network are contributing to the five School Games Outcomes today

The Impact analysis clearly showed that the SGO Network is making a positive contribution to the five School Games Outcomes. Awareness levels of the Outcomes varied across educational settings, with 66% of primary schools, 48% of special schools, and 40% of secondary schools reporting knowledge of all five Outcomes. Overall, 78% of settings were familiar with at least three Outcomes.

The school survey captured how schools rated the impact of their SGO across the five Outcome areas, using a 5-point scale, ranging from 'very positive' to 'very negative' with a 'no impact' option at the midpoint, as illustrated in Figure 2. Schools reported the greatest impact in relation to Outcomes 2 and 4. Notably, primary schools reported the most positive scores across the five Outcomes.

**Figure 2: What impact has your SGO had on your children in terms of the five outcomes (n=1,678)**

SGO Network Outcomes	'Very positive'	'Positive'	'Very positive' or 'Positive'
Outcome 1: CMO daily active minutes	35%	45%	80%
Outcome 2: Clear intent and positive experiences	69%	27%	<b>96%</b>
Outcome 3: Secondary school engagement/transition	30%	40%	70%
Outcome 4: Personal development	45%	41%	<b>86%</b>
Outcome 5: Advocacy and stakeholder engagement	37%	45%	82%

The Impact analysis explored the contribution of SGOs across all five School Games Outcomes, while the Value for Money analysis focused solely on Outcomes 1 and 4 due to limited data availability. A summary of findings from both analyses is presented by Outcome.

**Outcome 1: Advocate and position the delivery of the CMO daily active minutes for all young people, as a universal offer to maintain and grow school engagement**

The Value for Money analysis identified that individuals attending a school awarded a Platinum School Games Mark Award are 3.1% more likely to undertake 420 minutes of exercise (both inside and outside of school) per week compared to individuals attending schools which were not awarded a School Games Mark, statistically significant at the 99% confidence level.

The Impact analysis provided further evidence of the vital role SGOs play in helping young people meet Chief Medical Officer's Physical Activity Guidelines. Schools reported that exposure to new and varied sports through their SGO enables pupils to discover interests and talents they may not otherwise encounter, particularly in underserved areas. These opportunities play an important role in supporting pupils to build a lifelong relationship with sport, physical activity and movement, contributing to pupils' physical literacy and overall wellbeing.

Furthermore, 88% of schools reported that if their SGO was no longer available as they are now, their sport and physical activity offer would be reduced. This finding was reinforced by national partner feedback who said the SGO Network is effective at supporting children to meet Physical Activity Guidelines, contributing to health outcomes and driving inclusion and health equity, especially for special schools and pupils with SEND.

*"It engages everyone to participate from SEND to Pupil Premium and this has broadened our offer, so all young people have those opportunities to go to events more than ever before. School Games is providing so many opportunities than you might ever dream of taking part in. We*

*have no time to ring around other schools and set up competitions but with School Games it is all there by sending an email to our SGO”.*

*Teacher*

*“Providing opportunities to help ensure pupils realise there is more out there than just playing on the streets. Makes a huge difference to young people. They love it, we place a massive impetus on it. Children’s cognition in sport is so much better as a result. They are happier and healthier as it has given them opportunities in what is a really deprived area”. Teacher*

**Outcome 2: Ensure all competition has a clear intent and creates positive experiences based on the motivation, competence and confidence of the young people that need our support the most**

Further analysis of the 2023/24 Platinum School Games Mark Award applications demonstrates how the SGO Network has helped to shift the School Games Programme from solely competition based to a more participatory offer. Examples include the revamping of curriculum design to integrate intra-school competitions, introducing wellness weeks and sports days along with a variety of non-traditional sports like pickleball, speed stacking, skateboarding or glow dodgeball, and placing a greater focus on ‘personal best’. These initiatives have a clear focus on creating positive experiences for pupils that need the most support, particularly underserved young people or those with special educational needs and disabilities.

*“Inclusion and opportunity are massive. Our pupils would not get such opportunity without this. It is a rural area, so it is a long distance to travel to access facilities. They feel safe in the School Games bubble. It brings familiarity and helps build confidence”. Teacher*

SGO feedback also highlights their ongoing efforts to improve accessibility and inclusivity across a diverse range of sports and activities, using tools like the Inclusive Health Check to ensure that every pupil can experience a

sense of belonging. This has been achieved through the creation of calendars of events with clearly embedded intent, as well as the introduction of new sports and adapted formats designed to engage underserved young people, pupils transitioning between school stages, and those with special educational needs and disabilities. These targeted and celebratory environments help foster positive experiences and broaden participation among groups who may otherwise face barriers to involvement.

As a result, the majority of schools surveyed (74%), reported that their SGO provides a balanced mix competitive and participation-based opportunities. However, secondary schools noted slightly higher engagement in competitive opportunities compared to primary schools. This balanced approach has contributed to a rise in pupil engagement in School Games activities, including increased participation in after-school clubs, success in county-level events, and a growing number of pupils transitioning into community sports clubs, helping to sustain their involvement beyond the school setting.

*“School Games gives our children real life experiences. A lot of our children do not get these opportunities from home. The chance for them to have a go at events they just would not have the chance to otherwise. All students are given an opportunity to do things they would not get to do outside of school, which is invaluable for setting them on the path for a healthy life. For young people who do not access sports outside of school, they are prioritised for some activities”. Teacher*

The Review recognised the proactive efforts of SGOs to communicate the intent behind their calendar of events with schools, ensuring that the ‘right’ children are being targeted for specific opportunities. In addition, SGOs are increasingly placing pupil voice at the centre of their planning, ensuring that activities and events are shaped by young people’s interests and

needs, leading to more positive and inclusive experiences for all participants.

### **Outcome 3: Have a clear focus on secondary school engagement and transition points**

The Impact analysis highlighted the increasing focus SGOs have placed on secondary school engagement, particularly around Year 6/7 transition in recent years and the benefit this has on enhancing collaboration between schools locally. SGOs, schools and host sites reported that these transition-focused events are often targeted at pupils who may find the move to secondary school challenging, aiming to build confidence, foster new friendships, and help pupils familiarise themselves with their future school environment. Where SGOs have been able to deliver transition events and development programmes, outcomes have been successful, especially when they have involved young leaders from secondary schools.

SGOs also reported stronger buy-in from secondary schools when engaging directly with PE leads, rather than headteachers and host sites report that hosting an SGO enhances transition processes. Additionally, transition events were most effective when they complemented the school's existing transition offer, rather than duplicating efforts.

Despite this increased focus on transition, many SGOs report that this Outcome remains one of the most challenging to deliver. A key barrier has been the shift in the SGO Network's remit, from a traditionally competition focused model to one that is now much broader. As a result, some secondary schools continue to prioritise competitive opportunities or opt to run their own transition events, reducing engagement with SGO-led initiatives. SGOs noted that clearer messaging is needed for secondary schools to better communicate the purpose and value of transition events, helping schools to understand their strategic importance and encouraging greater buy-in.

Another significant challenge is the large and often geographically dispersed school networks SGOs operate within. Combined with varying school priorities and limited SGO capacity in some areas, this makes it difficult to deliver a consistent and coordinated transition offer across all areas.

#### **Outcome 4: Support the personal development of targeted young people through youth engagement and leadership**

The Value for Money analysis found that individuals attending a school with a Platinum School Games Mark Award are 2.2% more likely to have volunteered at least once in the last 12 months compared to schools who were not awarded a School Games Mark Award, statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Differential effects on non-cognitive outcomes, in terms of confidence and self-efficacy (being 'likely to keep trying when things are hard') were identified. Schools who held a School Games Mark Award appeared to have more positive outcomes especially in females and those in lower socio-economic areas, and this was true across Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze awarded schools. Confidence and self-efficacy are associated with significantly higher levels of wellbeing, which constitute 84% of the total monetised benefits, which can be incorporated into cost benefit analysis using HM Treasury Green Book Guidance on Wellbeing in Appraisal.

Similarly, improvements in non-cognitive outcomes were evidenced amongst underserved children and young people. The high value of benefits among these groups suggests that the greatest societal value of the SGO Network exists in non-cognitive development (confidence and self-efficacy). Note that this is based on correlational evidence, and it would be recommended in the future to perform a full Quasi-Experimental Design (QED) evaluation to robustly evidence this claim.

The Impact analysis reinforced the conclusions of the Value for Money analysis for Outcome 4 by highlighting how youth leadership opportunities are increasingly targeted e.g. Pupil Premium, special educational needs and disabilities, young people with low confidence or social challenges, or pupils with English as an Additional Language. Schools and host sites reported that SGOs organise, promote, and lead a wide range of pupil leadership opportunities and programmes, including clear exit routes into community settings.

In primary schools, these leadership opportunities included upskilling Play Leaders in Years 5 and 6 (ages 9 to 11), facilitating sport councils and volunteering at intra-school events. In secondary schools, opportunities also included mentoring and officiating. There were examples of SGOs collaborating with organisations such as NGBs, local councils and working on initiatives like the YST's Girls Active Leadership Academy to support, and where relevant, accredit leadership programmes and development pathways.

Furthermore, SGOs reported using tools such as Koboca Youth Voice Surveys and proactively engaging and responding to pupil voice and involving them in decision-making in their efforts to adopt a comprehensive and inclusive approach to sports leadership and personal development.

### **Outcome 5: Advocate and engage key stakeholders on the value of School Games to support local provision and improve the experience for young people and their families**

The Impact analysis demonstrated the positive impact of the SGO Network on Outcome 5. SGOs shared a broad range of examples around their engagement with key stakeholders, and their advocacy of the programme, using positive stories and social media to promote their work locally. Examples included dignitaries attending events (e.g., MPs and council members), formal engagement with other local stakeholders such as



public health officers, councils, Active Partnerships, and NGBs, and the use of social media to raise awareness with parents, and wider community groups.

Schools reported that the School Games helps to improve parental engagement, largely by the visibility and celebration of activities through channels such as newsletters and social media. Schools noted that providing events and after-school clubs has, in some cases, improved communication with harder-to-reach families, opening-up conversations around physical activity, healthy lifestyles, and pupil achievements. In a smaller number of schools, this parental involvement has extended into programmes focused on physical literacy, healthy eating, and weight management.

SGOs reported that engaging with school leaders, particularly in secondary schools, and senior leaders within Multi-Academy Trusts that oversee large numbers of schools can be challenging, especially for newly appointed SGOs or those working across large and geographically dispersed areas. Additionally, SGOs highlighted a perceived lack of coordinated advocacy for the SGO Network and called for stronger, more coherent cross-departmental support at the national level. They felt that consistent national advocacy would help to elevate the status of the Network, reinforce the value of the SGO role, and position PE, school sport and physical activity more centrally within school priorities.

The school survey also showed that 71% of schools report their SGO has helped to establish new partnerships that enhance both curricular and extra-curricular provision, as well as support pupils' transition into community settings such as clubs, coaches, facilities, NGBs, and community groups. The proportion reporting a positive impact was slightly higher in primary schools (72%), and special schools (74%), compared to secondary schools (68%). Notably, all alternative provision settings (100%) reported a positive impact.

*“Providing opportunities to help ensure pupils realise there is more out there than just playing on the streets. Makes a huge difference to young people. They love it, we place a massive impetus on it. Children’s cognition in sport is so much better as a result. They are happier and healthier as it has given them opportunities in what is a really deprived area”. Teacher*

Interview feedback from Active Partnerships also indicated a growing collaboration with SGOs, including the co-hosting of events to support place-based approaches. This in turn, has strengthened links with local sports clubs and improved access to community facilities. Furthermore, national partners noted that the SGO Network excels at connecting stakeholders, describing SGOs as effective and trusted local connectors, particularly in areas where long-standing relationships are well established.

## Consideration 2: The extent to which the SGO Network is serving the variety of school settings

Impact analysis found a wide variation in the number of schools served by each SGO, ranging from 19 schools in one area to 121 in another, with an average of 53 schools per SGO. 78% of schools reported they had contact with their SGO “at least fortnightly”, and 95% with contact at least once a month. Figure 3 illustrates the amount of contact reported by different school settings with their SGO.

**Figure 3: How frequently do you have contact with your SGO**

	Every week	Every fortnight	Monthly	Every 3 months	Every 6 months	Once a year or less	Never
Primary	57%	22%	16%	3%	1%	1%	0%
Secondary	51%	22%	18%	6%	2%	0%	1%
Special	48%	21%	21%	7%	0%	2%	0%
Alternative Provision	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Middle	73%	14%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	57%	17%	19%	2%	0%	5%	0%
Infant	22%	11%	56%	0%	0%	0%	11%

The Impact analysis also found that SGOs spend the majority of their time with primary schools (63%), followed by secondary (24%), special schools (10%), alternative provision (4%), and other settings such as infant and middle schools (3%). SGOs also indicated that their role serves the needs ‘to a great extent’ for 80% of primary schools, compared to 25% of secondary schools, 22% of special schools and 5% of alternative provision settings. These findings may be partly explained by the fact that 29% of SGOs report the PE and Sport Premium as a ‘strong influence’ on how they allocate their time, while 42% consider it a factor.

The Impact analysis also found a positive correlation between the level of contact an SGO had with schools and the perceived positive impact as illustrated in Figure 4. Schools that had at least fortnightly contact with their

SGO reported a more positive impact across all five Outcomes, as well as in areas such as strategic impact, the provision of equal opportunities, and support for the least active pupils. SGOs did however note challenges related to uneven levels of engagement across different school types, with secondary schools, special schools and alternative provision settings being particularly difficult to reach consistently. This highlights the need for tailored engagement approaches, which can be challenging for new SGOs who are still building relationships with schools.

**Figure 4: How frequently do you have contact with your SGO versus perceived positive impact (percentage of positive + very positive responses)**

	<b>At least fortnightly</b>	<b>Every 1-3 months</b>	<b>Every 6 months</b>	<b>Once a year</b>	<b>Not in the last year / never</b>
Broader focus	N=1,282	N=313	N=14	N=7	N=6
Impact strategically	<b>95.3%</b>	77.6%	28.6%	42.9%	16.7%
Providing equal opportunities	<b>98.0%</b>	89.9%	50.0%	25.0%	28.6%
Focus on the least active	<b>96.9%</b>	89.2%	46.2%	22.2%	28.6%
<b>Outcome</b>					
Outcome 1: CMO daily active minutes	<b>88.2%</b>	67.0%	28.6%	0.0%	16.7%
Outcome 2: Clear intent and positive experiences	<b>98.8%</b>	95.5%	57.1%	0.0%	33.3%
Outcome 3: Secondary school engagement/transition	<b>81.1%</b>	60.1%	16.7%	0.0%	16.7%
Outcome 4: Personal development	<b>92.7%</b>	76.2%	28.6%	0.0%	16.7%
Outcome 5: Advocacy and stakeholder engagement	<b>90.6%</b>	71.4%	30.8%	0.0%	16.7%

Further Impact analysis examined the perceived impact of SGOs on pupils across different school settings in relation to the five School Games

Outcomes, as illustrated in Figure 5. Notably, the most positive impact was reported in primary schools.

**Figure 5: What is the impact your SGO has on your children, by school setting (n=1,678)**

% 'very positive' plus positive' responses	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Special Schools	Other settings
Outcome 1: CMO daily active minutes	84%	60%	76%	86%
Outcome 2: Clear intent and positive experiences	97%	93%	95%	95%
Outcome 3: Secondary school engagement/transition	71%	66%	48%	89%
Outcome 4: Personal development	86%	85%	76%	85%
Outcome 5: Advocacy and stakeholder engagement	83%	76%	79%	79%

Furthermore, Figure 6 shows the varied types of support SGOs provide across different school settings. The most common area of support across all settings was the delivery of competitions, events and festivals. In primary schools, SGOs also played a key role in providing continue professional development, subject-specific expertise, and support in establishing links between schools and local community clubs.

**Figure 6: What support does your SGO provide you with?**

	Competitions / events / festivals	CPD / training	Links to local clubs	Subject advice	Equipment / resource	After school provision	PE lesson cover
Primary	98%	81%	65%	64%	36%	16%	6%
Secondary	95%	64%	59%	31%	38%	31%	3%
Special	97%	71%	57%	60%	43%	12%	7%
Other	93%	80%	61%	71%	32%	21%	25%

Overall, it was clear that schools recognise and highly value the contributions SGOs make towards achieving the five School Games Outcomes across all school settings.

### **Consideration 3: The extent to which the SGO Network is adopting the emphasis on getting the least active more active and sustaining participation and increasing/sustaining overall school engagement in after-school sport**

Impact analysis found that the evolution of School Games and the introduction of the five Outcomes has significantly enhanced accessibility and inclusivity for young people. Most SGOs now deliver events and festivals that offer a broad range of activities tailored to different ability levels, from beginners to more experienced participants. This inclusive approach ensures that students who might not typically engage in physical activity—including those with special educational needs and disabilities or from underserved or less active backgrounds, have meaningful opportunities to participate and benefit.

*“It is huge for us as a special school. It enables our children to be exposed to activities, sports, and environments they would not otherwise. For some of our children their main successes in school are on the sports pitch, and to see their faces when they stand up in assembly gives these children the credit they deserve. For our children, the level of opportunity is something that they would never normally engage with – the range and breadth of opportunity, the events, the leadership, links to strategy and national programmes that all comes our way from the SGO”. Teacher*

School survey responses indicated that 93% of schools believe their SGO has a positive impact on their least active pupils. This perception was particularly strong among special schools (95%) and primary schools (94%), with slightly lower agreement among secondary schools (86%).

Furthermore, schools noted that the work done through the School Games with their SGO is particularly beneficial for their ‘less active’ children, providing events that emphasise values over competition. They also noted that the School Games offers a wide variety of activities, drives an

understanding about the need to develop equal play opportunities and increases children's awareness of opportunities beyond the school day, which helps broaden horizons and widen participation.

*"We used to have football at lunchtime every day and we don't have football at all. The atmosphere on the playground is totally different and it's because they still have their opportunities to play competitive football outside school, but with different and more inclusive activities at lunch and playtimes, we now see many more children are taking part in the activities that are offered than before". Teacher*

SGO feedback supported these findings, highlighting that both primary and secondary schools have implemented tailored programmes specifically designed to engage their least active and underserved pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities and those from underserved backgrounds. SGOs also play a vital role by offering targeted initiatives, such as girls-only programmes like 'Let Girls Play', and working together with the Youth Sport Trust to provide continued professional development for school staff to improve inclusivity, sharing adaptive sport formats and resources, and supporting schools in building links with local community clubs. These efforts help pupils achieve their recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity within and outside of the school day and promote greater community involvement.

Active Partnerships also acknowledged the increasing focus of the SGO Network on engaging the least active and their work to tackle inequalities. They highlighted that SGO support for targeted initiatives plays a key role in upskilling teachers through continued professional development and capacity-building to deliver high-quality PE, school sport and physical activity. This impact is often attributed to the long-term relationships SGOs build and maintain with schools and their ongoing support to school staff. Active Partnerships also recognised the role SGOs play in tailoring their



provision to meet specific needs of young people, such as supporting young carers, those with a disability or living in areas of greatest need.

The Value for Money analysis reinforces these positive Impact findings. An examination of the School Games Mark Award Platinum applications for 2023/24, mapped against the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and the Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), highlighted the SGO Network's growing focus on addressing inequalities by supporting schools in more deprived areas.

As Figure 7 illustrates, the distribution of School Games Mark Award applications broadly aligns with the national profile, showing only marginal differences across deprivation bands. Notably, a majority of schools in England (69%) have fewer than 30% of pupils living in the most deprived neighbourhoods, and a similar proportion of applications comes from schools within this category. The 2,446 schools with the highest proportion of pupils from the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods – where 70% or more of pupils are from these areas, represent 12% of all schools in England, generated 13% of School Games Mark Award applications. Schools in the most deprived catchment areas demonstrate the highest application 'efficiency', with 48% of schools where 91-100% of their pupils live in the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods applying for an award. This analysis highlights the crucial role SGOs play in supporting some of the most underserved young people.

**Figure 7: Schools and applications – IMD profile (most deprived 20%)**

% pupils living in most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods	Schools		Applications			% schools applied
	N	%	N	%	Variance	
<b>0% (least deprived)</b>	4,133	19%	1,570	18%	-1%	38%
<b>1-10%</b>	7,181	33%	3,033	35%	+2%	42%
<b>11-20%</b>	2,264	10%	861	10%	0%	38%
<b>21-30%</b>	1,641	7%	597	7%	0%	36%
<b>31-40%</b>	1,339	6%	486	6%	0%	36%
<b>41-50%</b>	1,115	5%	416	5%	0%	37%
<b>51-60%</b>	976	4%	368	4%	0%	38%
<b>61-70%</b>	895	4%	362	4%	- >1%	40%
<b>71-80%</b>	771	4%	307	4%	- >1%	40%
<b>81-90%</b>	802	4%	330	4%	- >1%	41%
<b>91-100% (most deprived)</b>	873	4%	416	5%	+1%	48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,990</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,746</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	

The Impact analysis also demonstrates the valuable role of SGOs in sustaining and increasing school engagement in after-school sports provision. Consultations with NGBs reinforced the vital role SGOs play in supporting the delivery of sport in schools. SGOs not only facilitate access and participation but also provide valuable local insights and networks that enhance NGB delivery. Their involvement strengthens communication and collaboration among stakeholders, helping to align NGB objectives with local school contexts. This enables the Network to implement tailored initiatives targeting specific groups, particularly young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Additionally, NGBs report that a significant achievement of the SGO Network is its support for smaller and less visible sports, helping to innovate stage appropriate formats and establish pathways for participation and competition.

Feedback from NGBs did however acknowledge some challenges in the current setup. Examples included the occasional misalignment of goals between NGBs and SGOs, limited awareness of the SGO Network among

local clubs in some areas, staff turnover, inconsistent communication of the NGB offer to schools, and impact measurement.

## **Consideration 4: What observable contributions is the SGO Network making to wider outcomes such as the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people and the UK Chief Medical Officers' Guidelines**

The Impact analysis noted the considerable contributions the SGO Network is making to the physical and mental wellbeing of young people, especially since the Covid pandemic. Schools reported that the SGO Network has:

- ❖ Increased inclusivity of participation opportunities for all pupils, including underserved pupils, young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and a focus on the least active pupils.
- ❖ Improved the social and emotional growth of pupils, building a sense of belonging, developing teamwork, communication and leadership skills which contributes to their mental wellbeing and self-esteem.
- ❖ Supported pupils to discover new interests, activities and talents to help them build a lifelong relationship with movement, especially in underserved communities.
- ❖ Created pathways to community provision, clubs and competitive opportunities.
- ❖ Led to a positive impact on behaviour and school culture, with teachers reporting how participation can, for some students, improve behaviour, focus and attitudes towards school.
- ❖ Created a school culture of active engagement and excitement around physical activity and sport.

Feedback from SGOs supports these school insights, with many SGOs reporting an increased focus on mental health through targeted events designed to support pupils experiencing emotional challenges. SGOs work closely with schools to identify young people who would benefit most and tailor support to individual wellbeing needs. These events and initiatives often serve as valuable starting points for connecting pupils with local organisations that address low physical activity and poor mental health.

Furthermore, SGOs reported an increased focus on events that promote employability, personal development, and a sense of belonging by creating spaces and opportunities for young people to socialise and form friendships, helping to counteract the isolating effects of increased digital engagement.

*“School Games gives our children real life experiences. A lot of our children do not get these opportunities from home. The chance for them to have a go at events they just would not have the chance to otherwise. All students are given an opportunity to do things they would not get to do outside of school, which is invaluable for setting them on the path for a healthy life. For young people who do not access sports outside of school, they are prioritised for some activities”. Teacher*

*“There has been a positive impact on behaviour in school because children want to go to the events, and teachers have reported some improvements in academic performance and positive parental feedback through getting a broader range of young people more regularly involved”. Teacher*

The Value for Money analysis reinforces the contribution the SGO Network is making to the physical and mental wellbeing of young people. Although the analysis focuses on secondary schools, as this represents the age group for which monetisation methods can most robustly be applied, the findings are still positive. It is estimated that the SGO Network, costing £37.0 million to deliver to secondary school aged children over 11 years, yielded **£91.7 million in benefits**. This implied a **benefit cost ratio of 2.48**, suggesting that **every £1 spent yielded £2.48 in benefits**.

Sensitivity analysis was undertaken which sought to include children aged under 11 (i.e., from school years 3 to 6/ages 7 to 11), given they represent an estimated 52% of participating children. Children’s wellbeing years (C-

WELLBYs<sup>1</sup>) are used to provide an illustrative example of the value of the potential benefits that may be associated with the SGO Network.

The sensitivity analysis indicates that including children in school years 3 to 6 could yield **£237.4 million in benefits, enough to offset total SGO Network costs of £154 million** (equivalent to a benefit cost ratio of 1.54). It should be noted that the benefits from years 3 to 6 are not considered additive to the central results due to double counting and uncertainties around the application of WELLBYs to under 11's.

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<sup>1</sup> See State of Life's C-WELLBY: [We have lift off...The C Wellby and children's wellbeing — State of life](#)

## Consideration 5: What other observable benefits have been realised by the SGO Network?

The Impact and Value for Money analysis highlighted that schools and stakeholders value the unique skills and expertise SGOs bring – resources often not readily available within school environments. They recognise that SGOs contribute additional benefits for schools, pupils, and the wider community, including:

### Alignment and implementation of national initiatives and strategies

SGOs have the skills and expertise to translate national and regional school sport policies and priorities into meaningful action within local schools with 89% of schools reporting that their SGO has had a positive strategic impact in areas such as funding, policy, and curriculum.

As shown in Figure 8, SGOs are involved in a range of national programmes, with the Barclays Girls' Football Partnership being the most frequently led. SGOs who work only three-days-a-week or split their time with PE teaching often lack the time, scope, or capacity to develop initiatives or lead national programmes to the same extent as full-time SGOs.

**Figure 8: Breakdown of involvement in national programmes**

National Programme	N/A	Aware of	Signpost or link to	Influence	Lead on / funded delivery
Barclays Girls' Football Partnership	3%	8%	14%	16%	59%
Opening School Facilities (OSF)	4%	16%	34%	28%	18%
Inclusion 2024	15%	34%	23%	18%	10%
Holiday Activity and Food (HAF)	8%	30%	43%	12%	8%
Bikeability	6%	39%	34%	13%	8%
National School Sport Week	2%	6%	35%	51%	7%
Get Set	19%	39%	32%	10%	1%
Your Time (DfE)	53%	35%	7%	3%	1%

**Source: School Games Organisers Pulse Survey: September 2023**

## **Supporting continued professional development**

With support from the Youth Sport Trust, Active Partnerships and other partners, SGOs coordinate, deliver and facilitate often free or subsidised training and continued professional development for schools, improving confidence and skills to deliver high-quality PE, school sport and physical activity. Schools reported that this specialised support from SGOs can inspire school staff to think more creatively about PE, school sport and physical activity, encouraging its integration into broader school initiatives, such as cross-curricular projects and wellbeing programmes. School staff reported feeling empowered by seeing reluctant or less active children thrive in sport settings, reinforcing the positive impact of their efforts. This in turn, increases the likelihood of senior leadership buy-in, as the wider educational value of physical activity becomes more visible and aligned with whole-school priorities.

*“The students have had many opportunities to compete in activities tailored to their ability. The staff have been part of a mentoring programme which has increased confidence in teaching and learning to diverse needs, and it has raised the profile of PE around school. The CPD we have access to has helped staff deliver effective lessons. Teachers and staff feel confident that events will be run smoothly and have more confidence in delivering new sports and activities. The children love all of the activities, and it has helped hugely with engagement with some groups”. Teacher*

## **Providing and promoting equal play opportunities**

94% of schools reported that their SGO has a positive impact on providing equal opportunities. Further analysis of the 2023/24 Platinum School Games Mark Award applications shows that many schools have undertaken gender-specific reviews of their curricular and extra-curricular offers and used pupil voice to identify disparities in participation. They have then adjusted their offer to ensure inclusivity by introducing initiatives like girls-only clubs or bringing in inspirational role models, replacing certain



activities to cater for diverse preferences, or pupils designing their own competitions and clubs to attract peers. Schools and SGOs noted that these changes have resulted in increased engagement, confidence and teamwork among girls and underserved groups, enhancing confidence and teamwork.

### **Contribution to whole-school outcomes**

Schools reported that participation and achievement in the School Games has helped create a strong sense of pride and self-esteem among pupils, staff, and parents, often celebrated through events like assemblies. For many schools, the work of the SGO Network has played a key role in elevating the profile of PE, school sport and physical activity, contributing to a greater sense of community and helping to secure the buy-in of senior school leaders.

Schools also reported a range of positive outcomes linked to increased participation in physical activity, including improved focus in class, reduced behavioural issues, and greater enjoyment and engagement in physical activity among all young people. They also noted the cross-curricular connections and benefits, for example, using sport to engage pupils in subjects like Maths and English.

*“There has been a positive impact on behaviour in school because children want to go to the events, and teachers have reported some improvements in academic performance and positive parental feedback through getting a broader range of young people more regularly involved”. Teacher*

Furthermore, feedback from school-based host sites reinforced these findings. Many reported that hosting an SGO simplified event organisation, administration, and resource-sharing, reducing travel and logistical burdens for schools. Hosts also highlighted that the SGO role strengthened external partnerships and enriched local networks, often positioning the

school as a central hub for PE. In addition, hosted SGOs were seen to provide enhanced opportunities for participation, leadership and competition, as well as valuable support for Year 6/7 transition support. Some host schools noted that their pupils had greater access to a wider variety of sports activities, events, and competitions – opportunities that might be less available if the SGO were based elsewhere.

There is broad and full support for keeping a school sport network that continues to be outward-looking and collaborative, connecting national strategies and programmes through local communities to engage all young people, particularly those that are underserved.

## Section 6: Conclusion

The Impact findings of Objective A clearly demonstrate the significant contribution SGOs deliver across the five School Games Outcomes and beyond, with 88% of surveyed schools stating that their sport and physical activity provision would decline without the support of their SGO. The cost benefit analysis of the SGO Network was also compelling, with a benefit-cost ratio of 2.48 for secondary school-aged children and 1.54 for children in Years 3 to 6 (ages 7 to 11).

The Review also captured insights from schools and SGOs on what aspects of their PE, school sport and physical activity provision would likely cease or continue if the SGO role were no longer available. The findings indicate that the absence of SGOs would have a considerable impact on the delivery of PE, school sport and physical activity. Key areas likely to be affected include:

1. **Access and equity:** While some schools may continue elements of SGO-supported work through private buy-ins or affiliations, access would become inconsistent and there would be a reduction in the number of organised events, and opportunities, particularly inclusive festivals, participation events and targeted provision. Schools with fewer resources, or where the PE and Sport Premium is directed elsewhere, would be disproportionately affected.
2. **Mental health and physical wellbeing:** A reduction in organised events and activities targeted at pupils needing emotional support, may negatively impact pupils' mental health and wellbeing. Furthermore, the momentum behind the 60 active minutes agenda is also likely to diminish across all school settings.
3. **Skills, expertise and continued professional development:** If SGOs were no longer available in their current form, the variation, quality, and scale of development opportunities would decline significantly, reducing staff confidence and capability in delivering high-quality PE, school sport and physical activity.
4. **School and community club links:** Partnerships between schools and local clubs and community organisations would diminish without SGOs

promoting, developing, and sustaining these relationships. This would reduce opportunities for pupils to be active beyond the school day.

5. **Local coordination and collaboration:** Without SGOs acting as a central coordinating body, communication and collaboration would become more fragmented locally.
6. **Youth leadership:** Programmes and initiatives aimed at developing youth leadership would likely decline without SGOs training, supporting, mentoring and deploying youth leaders.

The Review however highlighted that some of the provision delivered by the SGO Network is sustainable, particularly in schools where senior leadership values PE, school sport and physical activity, or where there is a history of organising similar activities and competitions, although provision would likely be reduced.

A small proportion of schools (n=182), predominantly infant schools with limited access to the SGO Network, reported that their provision would remain unchanged if their SGO were no longer available. These schools indicated they would continue to manage inter- or cluster-level competitions independently or in collaboration with nearby schools, particularly within Multi-Academy Trusts. Some noted they had already adapted their provision following the pandemic, having experienced a reduced offer from their SGO, and had since developed a degree of independence. Others expressed a strong commitment to maintaining high-quality PE and sport regardless of external support. While these schools acknowledged that the absence of SGO support would increase their workload and place a greater organisational burden on them, the value they placed on school sport motivated them to sustain existing levels of provision.

Overall, the findings of Objective A were highly positive, clearly demonstrating the value and impact of the SGO Network. These insights were used to directly inform the second phase of the SGO Network Review –

Objective B, which focused on developing and appraising potential delivery models for a future school sport network. This phase brought together 70 stakeholders over 2.5 days to reflect on the strengths of the current SGO Network, agree on the core characteristics of a future model, and collaboratively co-develop potential delivery models for further exploration.

In May 2025, a final phase was added to the Review to refine and consolidate these ideas. A smaller group of 14 stakeholders, all of whom had participated in Objective B, worked together to co-develop a single, agreed-upon model that captured the findings and insights from across the entire Review process that has been shared with Government for consideration.

## Appendix 1: The five School Games Outcomes

**The outcomes for the School Games network to work towards in the 2024/25 are:**

### **1 Advocate and position the delivery of the CMO daily active minutes for all young people, as a universal offer to maintain and grow school engagement<sup>1</sup>**

Helping schools prioritise the delivery of the Chief Medical Officer's recommended 60 active minutes a day, or 20 minutes a day for SEND students. Supporting improvements in student's physical literacy, and social, emotional and physical wellbeing.

### **2 Ensure all competition has a clear intent and creates positive experiences based on the motivation, competence and confidence of the young people that need our support the most**

Using local insight to target young people who would receive the greatest benefit from involvement in competitions. This includes students from low socio-economic backgrounds, minority ethnic groups, SEND students and girls.

### **3 Have a clear focus on secondary school engagement and transition points**

Prioritising delivery in secondary schools whilst also recognising the impact on students transitioning in early Key Stage 2 and from Key Stage 2 to 3.

### **4 Support the personal development of targeted young people through youth engagement and leadership**

This includes opportunities across the full breadth of the School Games which incorporates physical activity, competition, high quality leadership and youth engagement.

### **5 Advocate and engage key stakeholders<sup>2</sup> on the value of School Games to support local provision and improve the experience for young people and their families**

Showing the role the School Games can play in making a meaningful difference to the lives of young people. Encouraging engagement from local stakeholders including senior leadership teams, Public Health and parents.

## **Acknowledgments**

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