



The power of the crowd

The role of crowdfunding in supporting community clubs and organisations.

A report based on findings from our match-funding pilot schemes delivered in partnership with Crowdfunder.

June 2026

Authors: Neil Smith, Nadine Koroma, Rebecca Anderson

Foreword



Lisa Dodd-Mayne
Executive Director for Partnerships and Place

Crowdfunding has emerged as a powerful tool that empowers local organisations to harness the support of their communities directly. It enables people to come together, invest in their passions, and create environments where sports and physical activity can flourish.

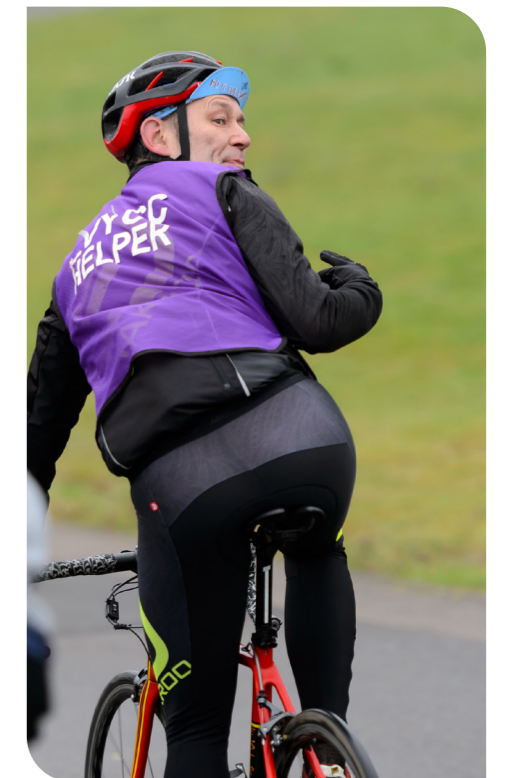
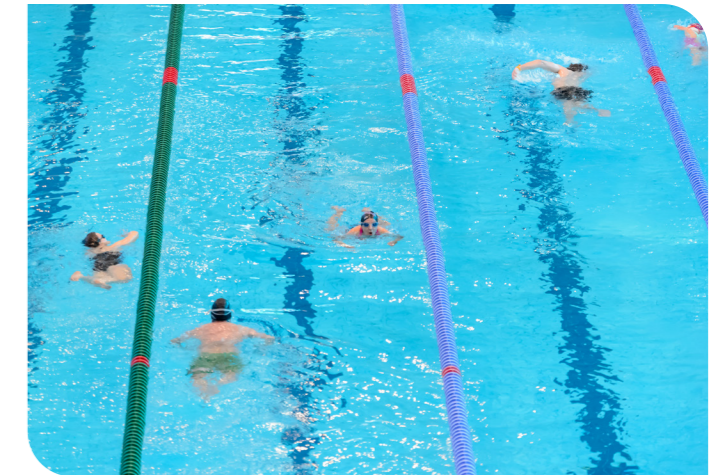
This report, therefore, highlights not just the financial implications of crowdfunding but, more importantly, its profound impact on the sustainability of our communities.

The insights reveal how crowdfunding fosters a sense of ownership and engagement, while also ensuring that Sport England's investment from the government and the National Lottery goes further.

After reading this report, I hope you will share my belief in the immense potential that crowdfunding holds for the grassroots sporting sector.

Together, we can champion these initiatives, support innovation, and pave the way for a brighter future for sport and physical activity in our communities.

“
Crowdfunding is a powerful tool that empowers local organisations to harness the support of their communities.”



Executive summary

One of Sport England's main purposes is to give everyone in England the opportunity to benefit from sport and physical activity. Yet our traditional grant funding model has limitations, most notably its finite resources and 'top down' approach. This report brings together our practical research into an alternative investment model – crowdfunding.

Between 2018 and 2023, Sport England conducted four 'test and learn' pilots, in partnership with the UK-based platform Crowdfunder, to evaluate their effectiveness in supporting the sport and physical activity sector. In each of the pilots, we made pledges of 30%-50% of the target amount (up to £10,000), with the remainder to be raised through crowdfunding. We were particularly interested in assessing the effectiveness of rewards-based crowdfunding (in which donors receive a tangible item or service in exchange for their financial contributions).

Our pilots found that crowdfunding's impact went well beyond the financial, inspiring communities, bringing new people into sports, helping to build valuable skills and creating more resilient organisations.

The purpose of this report is to share our findings with others seeking to adopt and implement the crowdfunding model.

Financial impact

The overwhelming evidence from our pilots was that crowdfunding is highly effective, with over 1,000 successful crowdfunding campaigns raising nearly £19 million, supported by an average contribution of 34% from Sport England. Crowdfunding also proved to be an effective way for Sport England to increase investment and address need: every £1 invested by Sport

England helped generate £2.13 in additional funding for community organisations.

Community engagement

To attract more supporters for their crowdfunding campaigns, organisations had to improve their engagement with, and understanding of, local communities. Nearly nine in ten organisations (87%) reported improved community relationships as a result of their crowdfunding campaigns. The average supporter pledge was £87, demonstrating strong local fundraising capacity.

New partnerships were formed with local businesses which offered rewards to support fundraising, often leading to long-term sponsorships and collaborations.

In terms of rewards offered by supporters, nearly 22,000 were claimed across the pilots, generating £3.2m and reinforcing the effectiveness of incentive-based engagement.

Skill development and capacity building

Crowdfunding demands time, effort, and skill from community organisations, and our findings demonstrate that it is worth the hard work, with 87% of participants enhancing their fundraising capabilities. Three-quarters (75%) reported improvements in content writing skills, two-thirds (69%) became more proficient in digital marketing, and over half (56%) felt more confident in using social media more effectively. These newly acquired skills have contributed to strengthening the resilience and long-term sustainability of community organisations.

'Test and learn'

We used the 'test and learn' pilots to refine our approach, whether through delivering carefully targeted training or adjusting the match-funding element. This sliding-scale funding model (based on need and impact) ensured fair distribution to priority locations and audiences. Our data-driven approach also helped us dispel myths and challenge assumptions. For instance, many believed crowdfunding would not succeed in lower-income areas, but we found the gap between these and higher-income areas in raised amounts was narrower than anticipated.

Looking ahead

The pilots confirmed crowdfunding as an effective model, demonstrating that it not only expands our financial reach within the sector but also enables us to support a broader range of projects. Additionally, it promotes fundraising and digital skills, encouraging organisations to strengthen their connections with both local communities and businesses. As a result, it has now been incorporated into Sport England's Movement Fund, which provides grants and support to sports clubs and organisations. Our research also emphasised the need for community-based skills development and the importance of maintaining donor relationships beyond the campaign period.

Our research clearly demonstrates the value of rewards-based crowdfunding and outlines effective methods to expand and sustain this success. We hope this report helps the sector remain resilient and adapt to community needs, ensuring that sport and physical activity remain accessible to all.

"We benefitted financially from the (crowdfunding) campaign, but more importantly, we really have brought about new interest from the wider community."

"Working on the crowdfunding campaign brought us together with lasting benefits for the running of the club."

Key terms

Crowdfunding is a method of raising funds for a project or venture by collecting small contributions from many people, typically through online platforms.

Rewards-based crowdfunding is a model in which individuals receive a reward in exchange for their contributions. In our pilot schemes, rewards were typically provided by the club or organisation itself (e.g. discounted membership) or by local businesses (e.g. discounted car servicing).

Crowdfunder is the UK's leading crowdfunding platform, with a stated aim to 'empower communities, businesses, and individuals to raise funds for projects that matter'

Crowdfunding sports communities

Programme report 2024

What we've achieved

£12.9m raised by the crowd
£6m pledged by Sport England

All made possible by more than **149,000** supporters

£86
 average pledge made by individuals

£17,205
 average amount raised per project

313% amplification

for every **£1** pledged by Sport England to successful projects, the crowd have added **£2.13**

£1 → **£2.13**

1,103 projects
 received an **+Extra funding** boost from Sport England



More than £890,000 **+Extra funding** unlocked by Sport England projects available from our other partners

giftaid it collected

On average per project

£831,090

£753

How we did it

Social media and email

7.2 million impressions

30k+ clicks

340k emailed monthly

6 creative campaigns

Press and stories

1 television advert aired

18 successful project stories told

49+ video case studies

Webinars

4,608 webinar attendees including **48 special guests**

Train the trainer

12 webinars held for professionals within the sport sector

"Thanks to your webinars & Crowdfunder website, we found things much easier than we had anticipated and have learnt many new skills."

Webinar attendee

NGBs we work with

WE ARE ENGLAND CRICKET

Staff training

EN ENGLAND NETBALL

Rewards

SkateboardGB

Audience

The impact it's made

87% say they feel **better connected to their communities** following their campaign.

56% say they have a large group of volunteers with **36% indicating an increase** in new ones.



of organisations feel **more financially stable** with 32% attracting subsequent funding.

61%

feel a **significant or somewhat improved level of skill** when using social media.

38%

of pledges are from **supporters with no prior connection** to the club or organisation.

52% say they have **found new partners or collaborators** after running their campaigns.

Section 1



Setting the scene

In this section, we examine how Sport England's pilot schemes established our approach and processes for successful crowdfunding.

Introduction, history and context

The scope, scale and timeline of our pilot schemes helped us to analyse and maximise crowdfunding's potential.

Following the success of a [Department for Culture, Media and Sport \(DCMS\) pilot in the arts and heritage sector \(delivered by Nesta\)](#), Sport England launched a series of 'test and learn' pilot initiatives between 2018 and 2021. The aim was to establish if crowdfunding (the practice of funding a project by raising money from a large number of people who each contribute a relatively small amount, typically through an online campaign), could work effectively within the sport and physical activity sector.

There are several types of crowdfunding platforms, including rewards-based, donation-based, equity-based, and debt-based models. Rewards-based crowdfunding was a model we believed would work best to help organisations connect more effectively with their communities. Under this model, the 'rewards' usually consist of goods or services added to fundraising campaigns to encourage supporters to donate and receive the reward in return.

Key pilots and objectives

- ['Towards An Active Nation'](#) (2018) – An initial pilot to assess crowdfunding feasibility within the sector.

- ['Activate Your Space'](#) (2019) – Expanded focus on community organisations beyond traditional sports clubs.
- ['Active Together'](#) (2020) – Emergency response to support organisations during COVID-19.
- ['Places and Spaces'](#) (2021) – A legacy-focused initiative post-2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

The initial pilot, 'Towards An Active Nation', launched in late 2018. We adopted a low-risk, low value, low-volume approach, working with existing awardees that had a funding shortfall within our established Community Asset Fund.

'Activate Your Space' was the next pilot scheme to launch, with a specific focus on engaging the less traditional organisations and projects who offer sport and physical activity and play a pivotal role within community sport (i.e. community groups, 'friends of' groups etc).

In early 2020, faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, the 'Active Together' scheme was introduced. This began as an emergency response fund, designed to support the sport and physical activity sector in unprecedented times. It provided match-funding to organisations throughout the various lockdowns, evolving over time to help support the recovery, reinvention and resilience required, post-lockdowns, under our wider ['Return to Play'](#) offer.

The final pilot, 'Places and Spaces', focused exclusively on supporting capital projects

to create a lasting legacy following the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022. With an initial geographic focus on the West Midlands, it later became a national programme. This pilot sought to test the process of seeking additional grant funding post-campaign, as well as employing three 'activators' – staff embedded within Active Partnerships (a network of local organisations across England with a mission to create more opportunities for people to be physically active and live healthier lives), working directly with organisations to support them with crowdfunding campaigns.

Importantly, these four 'test and learn' pilots were not singular interventions – rather they should be considered as evolved funding models. We adopted an iterative approach to the criteria, process and support provided, especially during the delivery of 'Active Together', when the country was transitioning through difficult and ever-changing times. As 'Active Together' launched and rapidly grew, we, as a funder, became more familiar and confident with the crowdfunding model, ensuring a continual feedback loop to enhance and implement improvements along the way.

Asking the right questions

'Towards An Active Nation' (pilot 1) focused on the following questions:

1. **Can it work in our sector?**
2. **What are the processes and mechanisms involved?**
3. **What are supporters' motivations behind supporting local crowdfunding campaigns?**

Once questions one and two were evidenced with the positive outcome of 20 successful campaigns, raising over £255k from 1,603 supporters, 'Activate Your Space' (pilot 2) was launched and it aimed to challenge our approach as a funder, to try to connect and support more community development organisations (as opposed

to community sports clubs), many of which were already on the Crowdfunder platform.

Another key question was:

4. **Can we identify and support less traditionally supported organisations and/or projects that still impact on sport and physical activity outcomes, reaching new audiences to assist us in meeting the wider outcomes associated with Sport England's Community Asset Programme?**

'Active Together' (pilot 3) was created to identify projects that could impact on sport and physical activity outcomes to help us meet some of the wider issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

This fund was designed and launched at pace, with the ability to adapt, evolve and refine criteria as the country navigated the uncertainty created by the pandemic, testing the hypotheses of:

5. **Can emergency funding be provided and be adapted flexibly over time? and;**
6. **Can we scale up a crowdfunding offer to a much greater number of organisations?**

'Places and Spaces' (pilot 4) was the final scheme, with a focus on capital investments to create a lasting legacy for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, with the 'United by Birmingham' brand (a programme designed to recognise projects in the region which have positive impacts on the local community). This pilot set out to test the following questions:

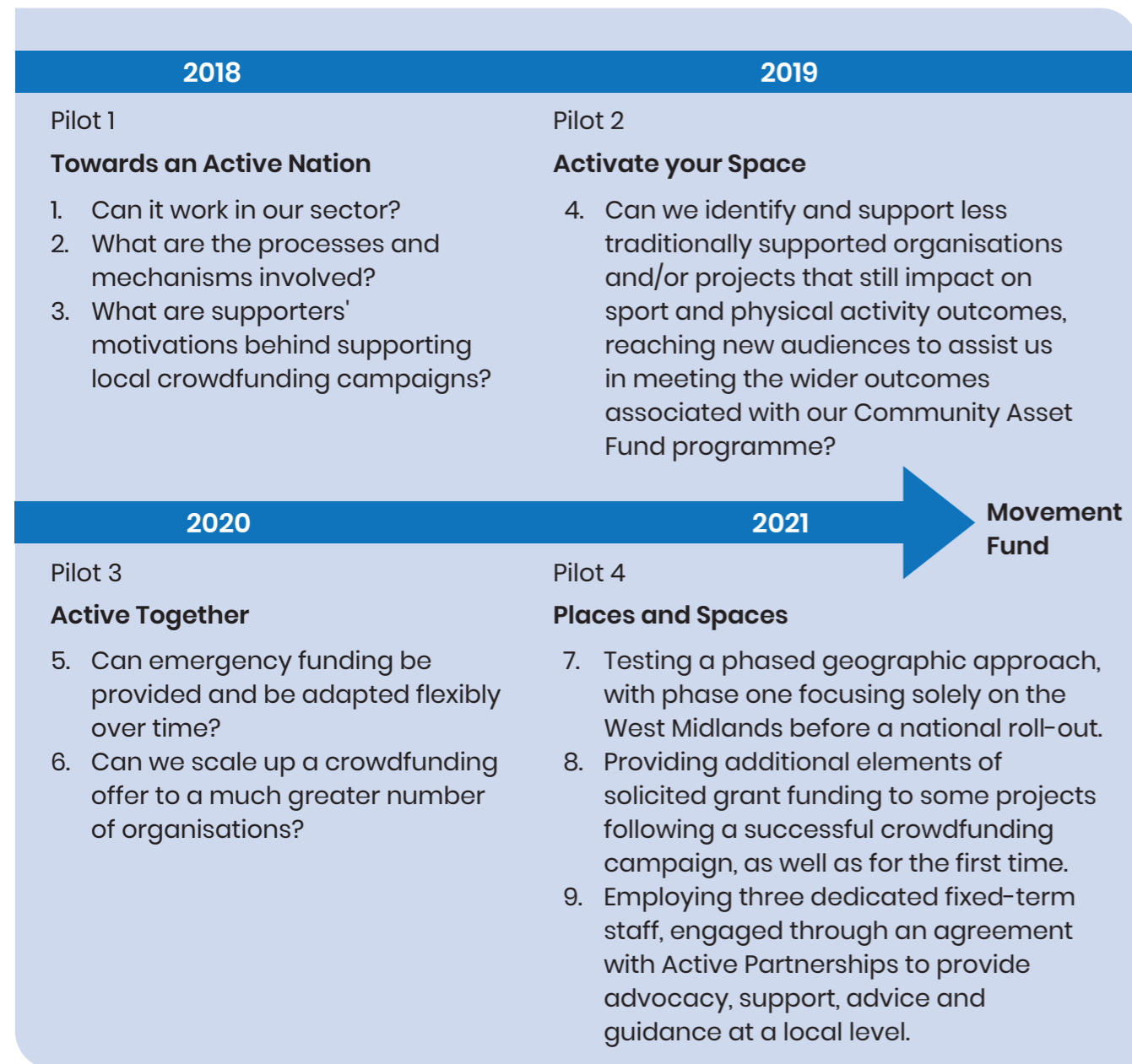
7. **Can we test a phased geographic approach, starting in the West Midlands (before a national roll-out)?**
8. **Can we provide additional elements of solicited grant funding to projects following successful crowdfunding campaign? as well as for the first time;**
9. **Can we employ dedicated staff (engaged through an agreement with Active Partnerships) to provide localised support and guidance?**



In 2024, crowdfunding as a funding application outcome was embedded within Sport England's open offer, the Movement

Fund, which provides grants of up to £15,000 for sports and physical activity projects in the community.

Timeline of Sport England's 'test and learn' pilot crowdfunding schemes



Drawing conclusions

With all four pilots complete, this report seeks to evaluate our work and the outcomes, using learnings from the campaigns, our customers and our experiences as a delivery team. With over 1,000 successful campaigns delivered through the 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces' pilots, we have the benefit of extensive data and observations to underpin the findings of this report.

The power of rewards-based crowdfunding

As our pilot schemes progressed, the ability of rewards-based crowdfunding to maximise engagement and financial value became clear.

Understanding what makes rewards appealing and who they incentivise has been a key learning for us and is integral to any funder. The rewards offered in our pilot schemes ranged in value from £1 upwards and varied in nature, from reduced membership offers to services, products, discounts or vouchers. They were generally provided either by the organisations themselves, existing members or supporters, or sourced and donated from local businesses.

Understanding the benefits

During the early stages of the four pilots, rewards were not a prerequisite for an organisation to run a campaign. However, once we realised the positive impact rewards could have, we strongly encouraged their inclusion and made them a requirement in campaigns to secure a pledge. This insistence was based on our evidence of the wider benefits for community organisations, which include:





In the 1,046 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces' campaigns in which we invested funding, there were a total of 22,242 rewards offered – an average of over 21 rewards per campaign.

Rewards are generally in place before a campaign launch, but they can also be added once the campaign is live. This approach gives the campaign owners the ability to update their supporters, through key 'project updates' on crowdfunding pages, as well as maintaining continual engagement. We learned that incentivisation is key behind any reward added to a campaign. We adopted the mantra of 'the wider the variety of appealing rewards, across all price points, the greater the ability to engage more supporters'.

We built our understanding of crowdfunding throughout the delivery of all the pilots, but further strengthened it once the volume of campaigns under 'Active Together' increased in the initial few months following launch. Rewards were clearly starting to encourage organisations to engage with businesses in their local areas, which in turn led to ongoing relationships, as well as providing the ability to increase the number and variety of supporters and therefore the potential to increase the values pledged. Numerous campaign owners reported this kind of insight throughout the evaluation of the pilots:



Using this type of feedback enabled our programme delivery team to prioritise the need for campaigns to have appealing rewards. We categorised rewards as two different types:

- Internal rewards – usually provided by the organisations themselves, which will likely appeal to existing members or supporters (i.e. sport-related, member-focused); and
- External rewards – usually donated by a local business, which will likely appeal to new supporters, beyond existing membership or supporters (i.e. not necessarily anything sport-related)

“You made us think about the audience we were talking to (i.e. don't write the page like a grant application!), and to focus much more on rewards. While the rewards didn't actually bring in that much income in our case, what they did do was spark a whole lot of community involvement. Some of the businesses who gave us rewards have now become club partners, and are bringing in fantastic new skills and ideas that could potentially change the future of the club.”

Spreading the word

While it was sometimes difficult to explain why we were so insistent on external rewards, the ability to share best practice from previous campaigns, as well as in the monthly webinars, helped to reinforce this approach.

“We received excellent support from Sport England staff, both in establishing the principles of our crowdfunder and also on the detailed design of the project page. In particular, we learnt that the rewards offered were rather more significant than we had hitherto realised. I also found it useful to attend a webinar run by Crowdfunder with participants from Sport England, which included an interesting case study.”

“It was a hugely positive experience; the first week was very daunting but we learned as we went along and the rewards element brought us closer to our community and we gained supporters we never knew existed. Everyone pulled together and it was a fantastic way to raise money, giving everybody a stake in our project, and it will hopefully be enjoyed and cherished by all – bringing some really positive outcomes to our small organisation. Thank you!”

“Have found this process extremely useful – we wouldn't have gone for rewards if Sport England hadn't encouraged us to do so... and this has actually opened up potential opportunities we had not previously considered (not just the published rewards – more about wider relationships with local business).”

Fundamentally, we needed to explain rewards-based crowdfunding to sport and physical activity providers who were new to the concept, as well as why and how it worked. From anecdotal feedback and comments left on pages by supporters when they pledged, we established three key categories to define these motivations:

- Altruistic: those who will pledge for nothing other than supporting a worthy, local cause;
- Benefiter: those who will likely pledge regardless, as they will benefit from the outcome of a project (i.e. members); and

- Shopper: those who will likely pledge, or be encouraged to pledge, to claim a specific reward, especially if it is incentivised and appealing in nature (i.e. the 'wider crowd').

Armed with this knowledge, we tried to ensure that each campaign achieved a balance and variety of both internal and external rewards, across all price points. In this way, all three categories of supporter could be attracted.



Reward numbers

The number of rewards a campaign has on its pages can be directly linked to the amount a campaign achieves, both financially and in terms of supporter engagement numbers. As an example, when analysing the majority of 'Active Together' campaigns¹, the figures were as follows:

The figures showed a direct correlation between the number of rewards available and the value and volume of supporter interest. In short, when campaigns add rewards, they see the benefits.

We can also hypothesise that the more rewards a campaign includes, the more engaged the campaign owner becomes, so this data not only proves the effectiveness of rewards, but also potentially indicates greater engagement from those running the campaigns themselves.

# Rewards	# Campaigns	Average raise (total)	Average raise (crowd only)	# Supporters (average)	Pledge £ (average)
0-5	28	£ 8,479	£ 5,535	106	£ 52.85
6-10	87	£ 12,408	£ 8,099	103	£ 72.74
11-15	141	£ 14,404	£ 9,818	112	£ 84.38
16-20	128	£ 16,302	£ 10,801	125	£ 86.15
21+	373	£ 19,298	£ 13,303	153	£ 92.12



¹ Analysis of 757 'Active Together' campaigns, which represented 85% of the total number of campaigns in this pilot.

Variety of rewards

The variety of rewards is inextricably linked to the level of engagement that a campaign achieves. Within the sport and physical activity sector and, in particular, traditional community sports clubs with memberships, there will be an existing, captive network of easy-to-engage people, namely members and their families, as well as any existing potential supporters.

Offering rewards that will appeal to these types of individuals is sensible; however, encouraging supporters from beyond that network (i.e. the 'wider crowd') was a message that we reinforced with campaign owners. Offering rewards that were non-sporting in nature and engaging with local businesses have been driving forces behind this initiative. The results of this were twofold:

- Campaigning organisations achieved new or renewed connections to local commerce, which in turn resulted in a broader supporter base and wider support across the local community (i.e. ongoing sponsorship); and
- A greater ability to appeal to more people within a community, especially those who may have no interest in the organisation or what it is doing, but would like to claim a product, service or discount and can be encouraged to do so through an incentivised offer on said reward.

For local businesses, supporting good causes results in positive marketing, exposing them to a wider audience and likely guaranteeing future custom, often with an onward spend attached to it (either through a customer spending more or returning to them in the future).

A typical example to explain this is a local restaurant donating a £25 meal voucher:

- the campaign lists the reward with a claim value of £20 (20% discount, thereby incentivising supporters);
- the campaign provides details about the business, ideally with a link to its website

or social media (positive marketing);

- the supporters see and claim the reward;
- the campaign receives a £20 donation towards its fundraising target (and sometimes more is donated); and
- once spent, that voucher could have onward spend (e.g. the voucher is merely a contribution towards a total meal cost of £50) and the customer could return (repeat customer).

Throughout the pilots, we saw an enormous variety of rewards, with each campaign usually having a mix of tangible rewards that they could provide themselves (i.e. sport-focused), sourced from local businesses (wider community appeal) or more incentivised offers contributed by members, such as car washes on a matchday, local litter picks by one of the teams, or the loan of a groundsman for grass cutting etc.

With support and advice from Crowdfunder and Sport England, campaign owners were able to better understand and harness the power of rewards to greater effect, as demonstrated by 99% of supported campaigns reaching their target fundraising.





The role of match-funding in driving positive outcomes

By adjusting the proportion of Sport England funding to community fundraising, priority groups could be better supported.

Before autumn 2020, our pilots had a blanket 50% match-funding offer for all applicants (e.g. if a campaign had a target of £15,000, we would pledge a potential £7,500 regardless of where they were based or what their project was seeking to achieve).

Following the initial success of 'Active Together' and the first £1m committed, we sought additional budget to continue supporting organisations through, and beyond, the national lockdowns. This was agreed under our 'Return to Play' funding, which had a particular focus on groups, clubs and organisations who had been impacted most by the restrictions and formed part of our overall £220m response to the crisis. To ensure that 'Active Together' could continue to support organisations sector-wide, while providing more focus on those who needed it most, we implemented a sliding scale in our match pledges for the first time.

Organisations with a focus on campaigns that worked with audiences disproportionately affected by the pandemic, for example those from a culturally diverse background and/or those with a disability were still matched with a 50% pledge offer and those that did not see their pledges capped at 30% or 40%. To ensure we were able to provide a focus on campaigns that would support people on lower incomes, we began to use the [Index of Multiple Deprivation \(IMD\) Decile \(the government's official measure of relative deprivation in England\)](#) of where an organisation was based to provide either a 30% (IMD Deciles

7-10), 40% (IMD Deciles 4-6) or 50% (IMD Deciles 1-3) proportion of funding.

Latterly during the pilots, this sliding scale of investment also incorporated a younger (aged 16-24) and older people (aged 70+) age priority groups, where we assessed whether a project's aim, as detailed on a campaign, was doing something over and above business as usual. Any campaign that we felt was proactively supporting either of these age priority groups resulted in a 5% 'top up', so all match pledge percentages became 30%, 35%, 40%, 45% or 50%.

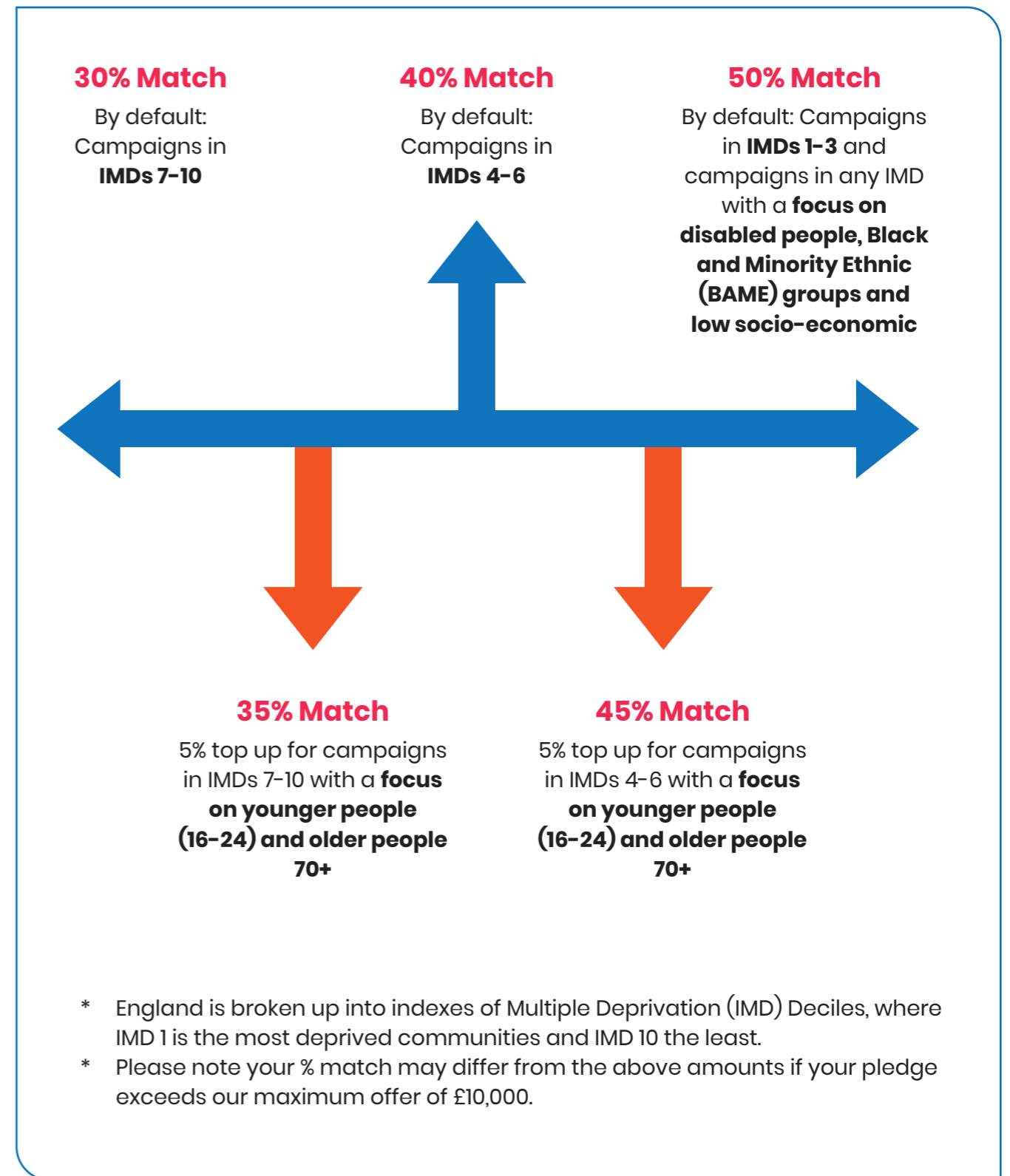


Communicating our criteria and decisions

While we explained our updated pledge criteria as being 'up to 50%' and outlined our priorities for the fund, the decision on whether a campaign truly focused on an

identified priority group was made by the team of reviewers. We explained our overall approach to match-funding with this graphic:

How our match-funding works in action



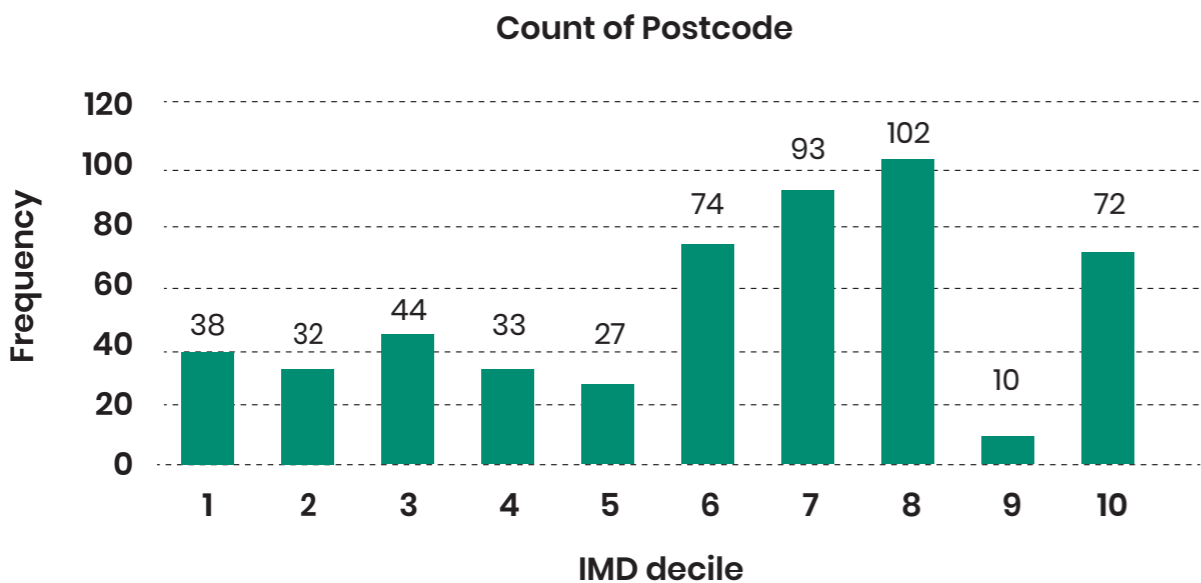


We were open and transparent about our decisions and welcomed challenges. Often this led to more detailed conversations explaining the rationale behind our calculation, but we would always reconsider if further evidence could be provided. On occasions, this led to a more in-depth

analysis of anonymised member postcodes (c.40 analyses completed in total), demonstrating, for example, that while an organisation may well be in IMD 10, the majority of its members come from IMD 1, 2 or 3.

Examples of anonymised member postcodes analysis

IMD Decile	Count of Postcode	IMD Decile Range	Pledge %	Members	% Overall
1	38	IMD's 1-3	50%	114	22%
2	32				
3	44				
4	33	IMD's 4-6	40%	134	26%
5	27				
6	74	IMD's 7-10	30%	277	53%
7	93				
8	102				
9	10	TOTAL	-	525	100%
10	72				
Total: 525		Total unrecognised postcodes: 7			
Median: 6					



Another positive outcome from conversations about our match-funding rationale was that they often led to wider discussions on what campaign pages may be lacking, enabling us to challenge how an organisation looked from the viewpoint of its wider community. For example, a cricket club stating that they had many Asian players and that they ran an annual event aimed at people from a culturally diverse community was great, however their campaign page did not reflect this, so we encouraged them to incorporate more diverse imagery into their page. Another example was an organisation saying that they have several players who use wheelchairs, yet none appeared within their campaign images or videos.

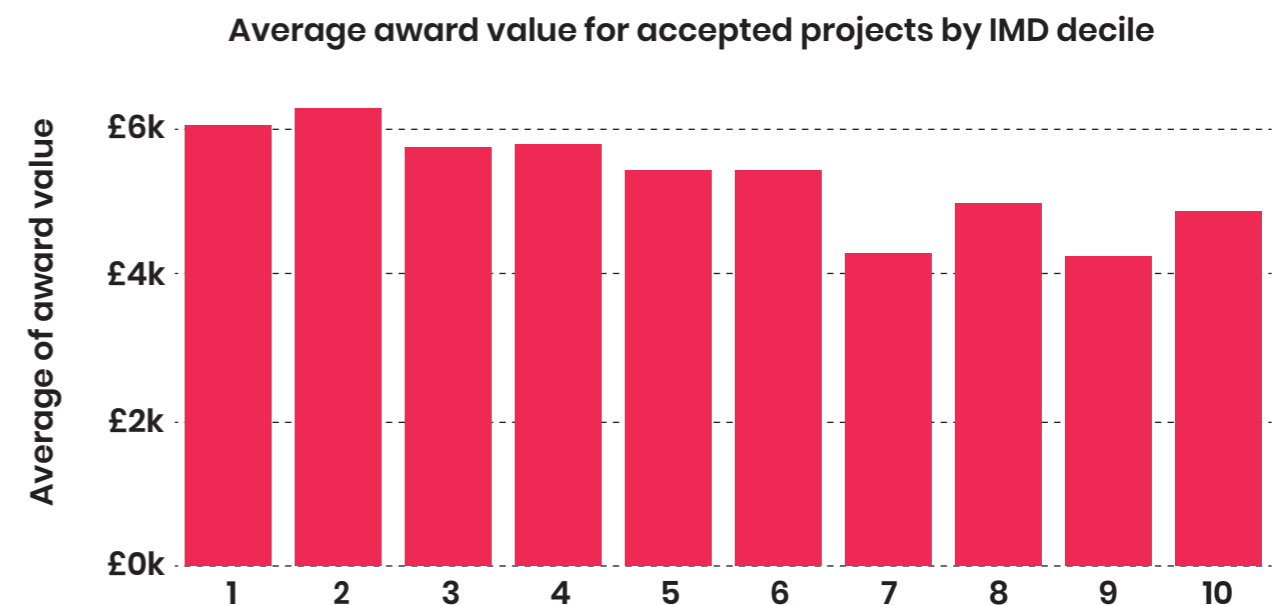
Overall, the ability to positively challenge and have honest conversations with applicants has been beneficial. We also showcased other organisations' best practices, which helped to change perceptions within some organisations and ensured that they were more accessible.

When the 30%-50% sliding pledge scale was implemented, we anticipated that more campaigns would fail to reach their target as a direct result, so success rates in those early stages were closely monitored.

However, this was not the case at all; reducing our pledge value meant that our investment was weighted more heavily to priority audiences. Those that did not meet any of the priority audiences had to work harder to secure a greater raise from their community crowds, which they did very well.

In summary, our match-funding was a successful approach to investing in organisations that needed it most, but without excluding any organisations wanting to try crowdfunding. The ['Return to Play'](#) investment through our Small Grants fund, for example, primarily focused on organisations within IMD Deciles 1-3, with 'Active Together' serving an England-wide audience, albeit with a proportionate approach to investment.

Sport England investment across all IMD Deciles during 'Active Together'





Deprived areas and crowdfunding – perception and reality

A common misconception was that if an organisation was working within a deprived area (IMD Deciles 1-3 in particular), then they would not be able to crowdfund anywhere near as effectively as one in a more affluent geography (IMD Deciles 7-10). If that turned out to be the case, it could represent a major barrier to our funding model.

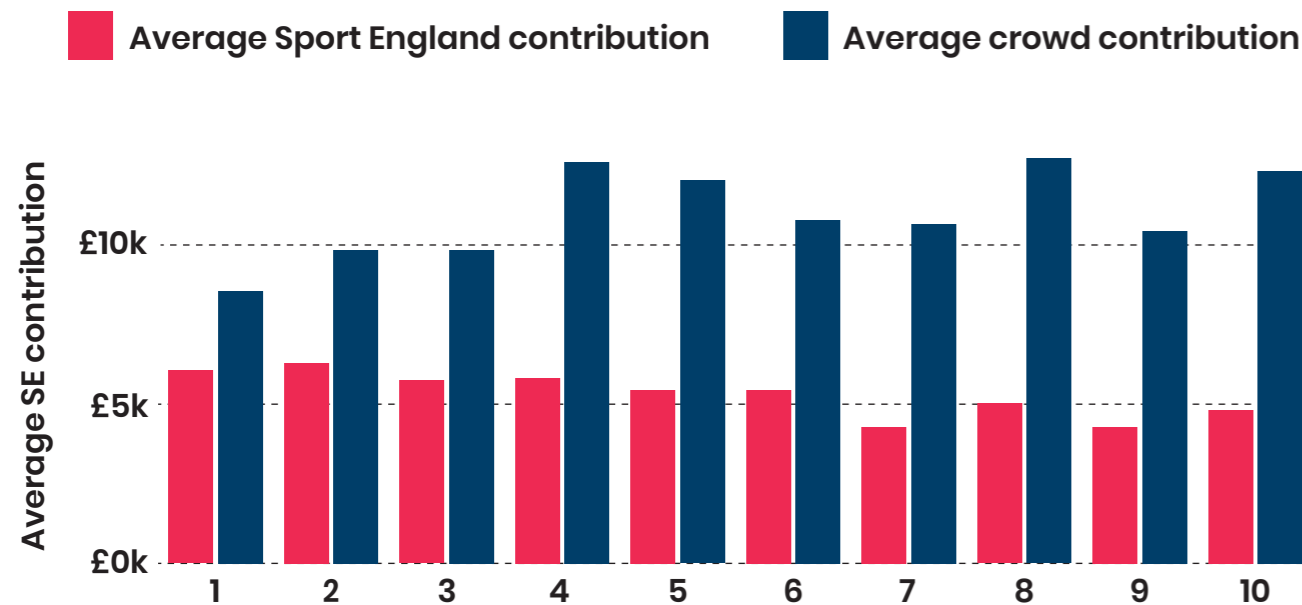
However, we found that, even though we implemented a weighted percentage that favoured organisations working within more deprived communities, the amounts directly raised by the community of supporters were not significantly different across IMD Deciles. This dispelled the theory that if organisations were based in IMD Deciles 1-3, the community would not be able to support campaigns in the way that more affluent areas could.

On 'Active Together':

- The average supporter pledge for campaigns in IMD Deciles 1-3 was £76, with an average crowd-only raise of £9,744 and an average of 123 supporters per campaign².
- The average supporter pledge for campaigns in IMD Deciles 7-10 was slightly higher at £86, with an average crowd-only raise of £11,604 and an average of 132 supporters per campaign³.

While the levels of pledges and supporter numbers were slightly lower for IMD Deciles 1-3, the figures still demonstrated a strong 'buy-in' for crowdfunding, with significant raises and an amplification on 'Active Together' of 259% (or £1.59 for every £1 invested by Sport England).

Average Sport England investment and crowd contribution across all IMD Deciles: 'Active Together'



² 191 successful campaigns supported with an 'Active Together' grant.

³ 404 successful campaigns supported with an 'Active Together' grant.

Targeting priority groups – diversity and inclusion

To ensure we were targeting organisations working with priority groups, we provided proactive support where necessary. In addition, we created assets for social media and other marketing and communications, as well as seeking conversations with organisations that work within this space. Where possible, webinar guest speakers and case studies included organisations that fell into our priority groups. One webinar incorporated a British Sign Language interpreter, which was advertised beforehand to stakeholder partners, such as UK Deaf Sports.

Culturally diverse communities and projects with a focus on disability were another two priority demographics for the majority⁴ of the delivery of 'Active Together' and all of 'Places and Spaces'. Of the £4.3m invested during 'Active Together':

- 5% went towards campaigns where there was a focus on culturally diverse audiences;
- 8% was invested in campaigns with a focus on supporting those with a disability;
- 27% supported lower socio-economic-focused campaigns (24% for campaigns directly in IMD Deciles 1-3 and 3% for campaigns outside those deciles which evidenced membership coming from them).

Case studies

- [This Girl's Ability: Empowering disabled girls and young women through sport](#)
- [Luton Town and Indians Cricket Club: welcoming the community](#)

⁴ 'Active Together' had no priorities identified when it initially launched in May 2020, with priorities on our investment implemented in October 2020, after an increase in budget through our 'Return to Play' funding.



Sport England provided proactive support for fundraising campaigns working in priority areas like culturally diverse communities.



The priority areas around ages accounted for 2% of 'Active Together' investment and 4% of 'Places and Spaces' investment on campaigns which focused on younger people (aged 16-24), with 0.4% of 'Active Together' and 2% of 'Places and Spaces' investment focused on older people (aged 70+).

With the age-specific priorities, it was agreed internally that campaigns from certain sports, which ordinarily attract these age categories, were not automatically classified with the respective age priority. This was to ensure our investment was not weighted more heavily into specific sports. Instead, we prioritised projects that recognised the need to actively engage that particular age demographic and were able to demonstrate that this was the explicit focus of their project, and beyond what they would ordinarily deliver.

For example, a bowls club would not be considered by default to be categorised as meeting our 70+ age priority and similarly, swimming and gymnastics would not automatically be prioritised as a 16-24 priority category, despite both sports typically attracting these age demographics. However, in terms of these specific sports, under 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces' we supported:

- 25 bowls clubs with £99,300, collectively achieving total campaign raises of £192,131
- 21 gymnastics clubs with £123,150, collectively achieving total campaign raises of £233,885; and
- 125 swimming clubs with £560,900, collectively achieving total campaign raises of £1,110,886.

The table below provides a full breakdown of the priority audiences for investments made through 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces' (excluding the aforementioned bowls, gymnastics and swimming projects):

Priority group	# Projects	SE investment	% of overall investment
Culturally diverse communities	38	£296,388	5.2%
Disability	79	£520,519	10.0%
Younger people (16-24)	24	£135,620	3.4%
Older people (70+)	6	£42,750	1.4%
Lower socio-economic locations/beneficiaries	222	£1,572,833	27.7%
Totals:	389	£2,568,110	47.6%

Building effective decision-making processes

Fast, fair and supportive processes were key to enabling successful crowdfunding campaigns.

When designing the pilots, we took the time to ensure that the process would be streamlined, efficient, manageable and collaborative. We achieved this by:

Streamlining decision-making

By the time of the third and fourth pilots, we were more confident as a funding team about our approach to crowdfunding, so decisions on whether to support a campaign could be made by a small number of colleagues, both internally within our core delivery team and more widely across Sport England, as well as external colleagues working within Active Partnerships. We called this group the 'reviewers'.

Once applications were received and checked for suitability and eligibility by one or two individual officers, the application and campaign information were added to a shared 'reviewers' sheet'. Reviewers were then invited to look at any new submissions, adding a simple 'Yes' to support or 'No' to not support, along with comments, questions or queries for the officers to pass onto the applicant.

With a 'majority vote' mechanism, once a campaign secured at least four reviews, a decision could then be processed. The equation for success was over 66% saying 'Yes' to fund and for declining an application it was below 33%. For anything in between, a meeting was required to discuss any issues, concerns or queries. This meant that more time could be focused on split-decision campaigns.

Typically, decisions were made two to three days after submission, a quick turnaround time which was critical to crowdfunding campaigns as they were often already live and time dependent. We communicated this rapid decision-making process directly with applicants, encouraging and supporting them to action any suggested improvements quickly before the decision window closed. We also recognised that sports clubs typically take decisions by committee and therefore making changes can be slow, so this was an important aspect because any delay in implementation would likely be detrimental to a live crowdfunding campaign.

Establishing a 're-review' process

To support applicants who needed more time, we introduced a 're-review' process. In simple terms, if an applicant was declined a pledge offer, we explained that we would take another look at their page, as long as their campaign was either draft (i.e. not yet live) or in its early stages. We would ask applicants to action any changes that we suggested as soon as possible and come back to us when ready.

The caveat was that, once a campaign was over or near completion, we would not be able to consider a re-review – this added urgency and increased dialogue with applicants to ensure that campaigns were improved and made as strong as possible, usually resulting in a successful outcome the second time around.

Once a decision was made by the team of reviewers, decisions were processed both on the reviewers' sheet and within the Crowdfunder Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system; if successful, the applicants received an email from the team confirming our pledge offer and reiterating our published pledge criteria and the terms and conditions of awards. If unsuccessful, an automatic email from the Crowdfunder CRM system informed the applicant with a generic email.



Once a month, the team emailed all unsuccessful applicants to remind them of the re-review process.

Internally, this process was simple: the applicant did not need to submit another application form – they were able to request this via email. The Crowdfunder CRM system has statuses which indicate where an application is in the workflow, so we simply moved the application back from ‘declined’ to ‘under review’. Another review was then requested and a new decision could be reached and conveyed to applicants.

Across ‘Active Together’ and ‘Places and Spaces’, the team undertook approximately 466 re-reviews, with 96% resulting in a ‘fund’ decision the second time around. Re-reviews were simple to administer and gave applicants the opportunity to work on advice and guidance provided by the reviewers to strengthen their campaigns and hopefully ensure a more successful outcome. This approach ensured that more of our applicants were able to secure funding and that their campaigns achieved greater raises.

Effective communication: from initial acknowledgement to ongoing support

We recognised that crowdfunding was a new and sometimes daunting prospect for many organisations, so the language, tone and detail explaining and supporting applicants along every step of their crowdfunding journey was paramount. Responding promptly to queries, with a clear understanding of what support was required and when, was a key priority for the delivery team. While the Crowdfunder CRM system has some built-in automation, there was a need to establish additional clear and concise email templates to cover every stage of the crowdfunding journey.

Once a new submission came in, the initial eligibility check was completed and

the detail added to the decision sheet for the reviewers. Each submission was acknowledged using a standard email template, along with bespoke initial campaign improvements if required. For example, if an application had no rewards or images, we would suggest improvements in these areas to strengthen their chances of success with the reviewers.

We also used email templates to highlight the coaching resources available from Crowdfunder, including one-to-one coaching. We included links to monthly webinars, video FAQs, our ‘Sports Campaign Improvement Guide’ and the informal weekly drop-in sessions offered by Crowdfunder. We also explained that while decisions were likely in two to three days, applicants should not worry if their initial outcome was unsuccessful, as they would have the opportunity for ‘re-review’, as previously outlined.

Despite the amount and variety of pre-application information supplied, most campaigns had room for improvement. This was not necessarily indicative of a weakness in the information available to applicants but more a case of them not doing enough research before applying, a common issue across most funding programmes and one which funders are constantly trying to resolve.

Following the initial acknowledgement, there was often further dialogue with applicants to support and guide them on how to make improvements. This was perhaps the most resource-intensive aspect in the delivery of these funds but generally involved no more than two members of full-time staff, who would also be responsible for other administrative tasks.

Sharing best practice

One of the many strengths of this crowdfunding model is the ability to share best practice. For example, if we were struggling to explain the importance of the visual layout and formatting of text, we would share examples of other campaigns that had done it well.

Having such a volume of successful campaigns across many different sports

also helped, as we found certain sports clubs identified with campaigns from other clubs delivering the same sport, with an unspoken message of ‘if they can do it, so can you’. Even after a decision, during and post-campaign, we still had ad-hoc engagement with organisations to help with queries, concerns or celebrate successes, which fostered a genuine connection and contributed to the positive customer experience evidenced here:

“The process of building our campaign page and securing the pledges we have would not have been possible had it not been for the support, advice and motivation we received from Sport England. The team expertly helped us through the process in a supportive manner but also by providing very clear actions and targets for us to hit on the way. Our page’s quality would not be where it is had it not been for their input.”

“The support available from Crowdfunder and Sport England was excellent and really helped make the process easier. It actually caught me off-guard how efficient and quick Sport England were at supporting me with this.”

“I think Sport England should be congratulated on this initiative as I believe it increases the chances of funding going to clubs who really deserve it and are well embedded in the community. I cannot speak more highly of the support we have had from the team.”





Funding decision and post-campaign survey

Once we made a decision to fund, we would email applicants, congratulating them, explaining our pledge and grant conditions and outlining next steps. We also reminded all applicants of the wraparound support available, latterly with a 'top tips' to consider.

After a campaign closed successfully, the Crowdfunder CRM would automatically trigger a Survey Monkey link to our post-campaign surveys eight weeks later, which was a condition of our grant. In some instances, we needed to manually follow up with applicants for their outstanding survey. For the 'Places and Spaces' pilot, there was also a grant condition of Sport England signage for their project, so each applicant was contacted not only to congratulate them on a successful campaign but also to provide them with a signage order form.

Redirecting unsuccessful grant applicants to crowdfunding

We also engaged with applicants who had been unsuccessful on other recent Sport England funding programmes but who might benefit from crowdfunding. For example, data on unsuccessful applications to our Small Grant fund was extracted from our systems and sense-checked to see if the organisations and/or projects could be considered for crowdfunding.

An email was sent to the relevant organisation, highlighting crowdfunding as a potential option and indicating that we may also be able to consider a pledge once a campaign was created. If we were not able to support with a pledge, we explained how other funders that work with Crowdfunder might be interested. We provided them with all the onboarding information and links to upcoming webinars to enable them to make an informed decision on whether to proceed.

Over time, we also included a line in our correspondence to unsuccessful Small Grant applicants, highlighting crowdfunding as an option. We saw a number of applicants come through to our pilot funds who had previously been unsuccessful with a traditional grant application. This not only provided them with a second chance to raise funds to carry out their project, but also improved Sport England's reputation, helping to turn a negative outcome into a positive experience.

"A grant application to Sport England was directed towards this path and without that we would not have considered it. However, the benefit has been to think through the project in much more detail and to enable us to spread the word of our work and our funding challenges to a wide audience rather than relying on one single source of funding for a smaller project."

Declined project outcomes

By capturing data on applications which did not receive a pledge, we were able to track whether they still ran a campaign and, if so, how successful it was. Excluding the ineligible organisations and/or projects, our data revealed that:

- 18% did not launch their campaign;
- 52% launched but were unsuccessful in reaching their target; and
- 30% launched and were successful in reaching their target.

Approximately 136 campaigns that we declined never launched a campaign page and their crowdfunding journey ended there.

Approximately 228 declined campaigns went on to run successful campaigns without our pledge, collectively raising over £2.5m from more than 26,500 supporters. Of these, 63 exceeded their targets, with an average raise overall of £10,625 per campaign. This was slightly lower than the

average crowd-only raise of £11,362 across the 'Active Together' campaigns that we invested into.

Approximately 401 declined campaigns did launch but were unsuccessful in reaching their target: 12 of these were on the 'All or nothing' funding model (where the funds raised will have been refunded to their supporters – see page 45 for more details of this model); and 389 were on the 'Keep what you raise' model, resulting in over £1.1m being unlocked from more than 16,000 supporters. This represented a smaller average campaign raise of £2,875.

Finally, when looking at the funding models chosen by declined applicants, approximately 81% chose the 'Keep what you raise' approach, with the remaining 19% opting for 'All or nothing'. It is interesting to note that, despite the risk of having to return funds to supporters if the target sum was not raised, the 'All or nothing' model was on average far more successful.

Funding models chosen by declined applicants and their respective results

	Keep what you raise	All or nothing
Number of campaigns	619	146
Success rate	30%	84%
Average crowd contribution	£5,526	£8,104
Average crowd pledge	£98.84	£101.18
Amount refunded (All or Nothing only)		£17,543

Section 2



Telling the story

The way that organisations communicated their project was crucial to winning over supporters and raising funds. In this section, we examine the most successful strategies and how they were applied.

Videos drive success

Short, self-made campaign videos played a crucial role in generating interest and increasing financial contributions.

We learned from Crowdfunder’s experience that, across all the campaigns on their site, videos significantly increase the chances of success.

We therefore recommended to all applicants building a campaign that if they were able to add a video, they should do so. We advised them to keep the video short (one to two minutes maximum), using it to explain who they were, what they were doing and why, with a call-to-action and description of any rewards they were offering. We found that the best videos are specific to the crowdfunding campaign, with more generalised, promotional videos a weaker engagement tool.

We found that having a short, campaign-specific video at the top of the page captured people’s attention and helped them to quickly understand what was needed and how they could support it. Having a high-end, professionally shot video is not necessary – often the best videos are shot on a mobile device, with one person talking to camera. Videos are an effective engagement tool when added to a social

media feed, particularly for organisations with an established social media following. Where the campaign owners’ skillset did not extend to creating a video, they sometimes asked their membership for help, and by doing so increased internal awareness, collaboration and understanding of what fundraising involves.

56% of awardees indicated a significant or somewhat improved skill level in creating film.⁵

York Railway Institute (RI) Community Sports Club’s crowdfunding video



⁵ 1,046 respondents to our post-campaign survey (894 through ‘Active Together’, 152 through ‘Places and Spaces’).

“I would say that I have learnt a huge amount from this experience. It’s been great to hear the responses from the community when I see them in person; it has not only helped raise awareness of our project, but it has also driven members of our community to contact me to get involved. It’s been brilliant. Not only has it provided much needed funding, it has also advertised our project and where we are currently. I did feel at the outset I was a little out of my depth with the videos and page set-up etc, but the more I have edited the more confident I have become. The team have been so helpful, I really could not have done this without their support and guidance throughout.”

“Preparing the campaign has been a very interesting learning experience for us and we learnt a few new skills such as making a video (albeit a very amateur one!).”

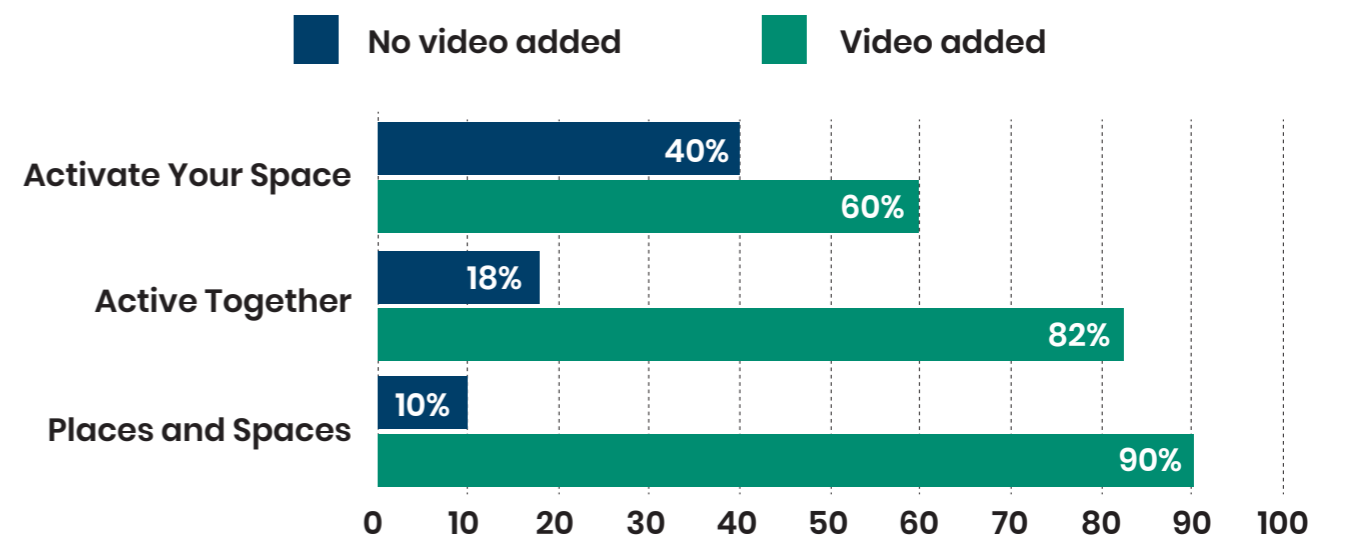
“The support we received from you was excellent. It has enabled me to be more confident when creating the website and videos.”

Data on video use

Across three of the four pilots where data is available, 82% of campaigns created and added a video to their page⁶. Looking at each fund specifically, it became apparent that, over time, as we began to understand the value and impact of videos on successful campaign outcomes better, our own messaging and encouragement in

this area strengthened. This resulted in 90% of ‘Places and Spaces’ campaigns creating a video and adding it to their page. This high success rate can partly be attributed to the fact that ‘Places and Spaces’ was a capital fund, thereby creating a greater opportunity for video use, as it allowed for the visual demonstration of the tangible improvements being campaigned for.

Analysis of video use in campaigns during three of the pilots



⁶ A total of 1,084 campaigns successfully received a grant from Sport England.



In terms of the impact of video on the amount a campaign raised (inclusive of our pledges), and the number of supporters that engaged, we found that by having a video:

- ‘Places and Spaces’ achieved an 18% increase in financial raise, with a 9% increase in supporter numbers;
- ‘Active Together’ achieved a 34% increase in financial raise, with a 22% increase in supporter numbers; and
- ‘Activate Your Space’ achieved a 161% increase in financial raise, but a 9% decrease in supporter numbers.

Examining the ‘Activate Your Space’ data, which encompassed 36 campaigns, it is notable that including a video appears to have resulted in a lower average number of supporters. This outlier may be explained by the fact that one particularly successful project with over 1,500 supporters did not use a video, potentially skewing the results. Despite this decline in average supporter numbers when video was used, the table above shows that average funds rose sharply when video was used. This could be explained by the fact that several ‘Activate your Space’ campaigns with videos achieved significantly higher-than-average financial raises (between £30,000 and £60,000).

Other theories for video-related success include the pre-COVID-19 timing of the ‘Activate Your Space’ pilot, when the volume of live campaigns was relatively low, and supporters therefore had fewer choices in terms of campaigns to support. However, without more data, it is not possible to prove or disprove these theories.

Impact of video usage on three of the crowdfunding pilots

FUND	With video		Without video	
	Average raise	Average supporter #	Average raise	Average supporter #
‘Places and Spaces’	£21,947	151	£18,530	138
‘Active Together’	£17,610	138	£13,146	113
‘Activate Your Space’	£19,234	195	£7,365	215

Images boost outcomes

Carefully chosen photographs connected funders to the aims of the campaign and the people behind it.

The Crowdfunder platform gives users the ability to add photographs onto their campaign page. As the pilots progressed, it became apparent that using good, strong images encouraged engagement.

To ensure a campaign resonated with the community it was aimed at, the use of stock images was generally discouraged. Instead, we suggested the use of images featuring members of that community to boost engagement.

When campaigns were fundraising for facility improvements, we would often see campaign images showcasing the more glossy, polished side of the organisation. However, we began to challenge organisations to include images of the poor state of their facilities, as a ‘warts and all’ showcase, alongside images of the great work that these community organisations do throughout the year.

Using powerful images within a campaign page enabled key messages to stand out, while recognising that not everyone who views a campaign page will read it all. Images enabled organisations to make the most of the potentially short time a visitor may spend on their campaign page. Our advice on basic page layout suggested using a heading, some text, then adding a relevant image; another heading, text, relevant image; heading, text, image and so on, to ensure every page was as visually engaging as possible.

We also advised if we felt any images were not relevant to the particular campaign. Very occasionally we suggested that images were unsuitable and be replaced. In general, we found that a mixture of facility images, images of people doing physical activities and pictures from social events was the best recipe for campaign success:

49% of awardees indicated a significant or somewhat improved skill level in creating images.⁷

Example images – people



Images like these from Stockport Rugby Union Football Club, which capture the people and spirit of community, tended to work well in crowdfunding campaigns.

⁷ 1,046 respondents to our post-campaign survey (894 through ‘Active Together’, 152 through ‘Places and Spaces’).



Example images – facilities

We encouraged a 'warts and all' approach to images to show the current state of facilities, as well as examples of what the facilities could look like as the result of the fundraising efforts



Before and after pictures of an astroturf cricket pitch showed potential supporters how their contributions to the campaign would be used





Text tells stories

Guidance on content writing helped campaigns to become more successful.

During the initial two pilots, our focus was on the broader concepts of crowdfunding: whether it was effective and if it could connect with organisations we do not currently work with. Following the launch of 'Active Together' in response to the COVID-19

pandemic, the number of applications grew substantially, as did our understanding of what makes a strong, successful campaign.

It became clear that additional prompts and guidance on the use of text on a campaign page would benefit applicants. This approach was helped by Crowdfunder implementing template text into their system for sport campaigns, providing users with guidance on headings, what story they should tell, in what order and in how much detail. These prompts are shown below:

Who are we?

Use this space to give your audience a friendly introduction to your club or organisation.

[upload an image here]

Why are we crowdfunding?

This is where you should explain the reason you need to raise money. Are you launching a new women's team? Perhaps you need to improve facilities or buy new kit? Tell us here.

If you're applying for extra funding, this is a good place to demonstrate why your project is eligible so refer back to the criteria to help complete this section.

[upload an image here]

How we'll spend the money raised

It's important to be transparent about how you plan to spend the money you raise. Your audience will be more likely to make a pledge if they can see how their donation will help. Be specific and add a budget breakdown.

[upload an image here]

Community impact

It's important to explain the wider impact of your organisation for the whole community. Who does it benefit and why? Perhaps your facilities are used for other purposes outside of sport too?

[upload an image here]

How you can play your part

There are four simple ways to help us reach our target and make this project a reality.

1. Make a pledge. Don't delay if you're going to support us because momentum is key to our success!
2. Spread the word. Share our project on your social media pages and tell the world to get behind us! The more people we reach, the more support we will get.
3. Offer rewards. Get involved if you are a local business by donating things we can offer to our supporters. We will give you a shout out!
4. Fundraise for us. If you want to run your own fundraiser – maybe a sponsored activity or similar – use the 'contact project' button at the top of our page to let us know. Setting up your own page only takes a few minutes and you won't need any bank details. Just a fun idea!

This approach led to stronger campaigns, with clearer, more concise and relevant messaging, which in turn led to greater success and an understanding of what to write and how best to write it:

72% of awardees indicated a significant or somewhat improved skill level in storytelling.⁸

75% of awardees indicated a significant or somewhat improved skill level in content writing.⁹

^{8&9} 1,046 respondents to our post-campaign survey (894 through 'Active Together', 152 through 'Places and Spaces').



Timing is crucial

Our pilot schemes also provided valuable insights into the optimal time of year and duration for an effective campaign.

Crowdfunding campaigns can last up to 12 weeks, with the ability to extend this timeframe, if required, by request to Crowdfunder. However, we found that a campaign duration of four to six weeks was optimal and recommended this timeframe. The reasons for this were twofold:

1. Running campaigns can be hard work, so a short, sharp period of fundraising is an effective way to engage a wider audience without being too exhausting for those running it, and;
2. A long campaign can run into 'crowd fatigue', whereby support drops off and the messaging becomes repetitive and less effective.

Looking at the timeframe it takes for a campaign to reach its fundraising target, Crowdfunder's analysis across all its campaigns revealed some key trends. Over 34% of pledges are made in week one, falling to half that percentage in week two, then gradually reducing through to week six, after which the numbers drop even further.

In terms of our own research, we found that after the initial pilot, successful 'Activate Your Space' campaigns ran for an average of 12.6 weeks, with the average timeframe falling to 8.5 and 8.6 weeks for the 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces' pilots respectively. The average across all these three pilots was 9.9 weeks, or 69.5 days. This is an indication that our advice on campaign length was being listened to by applicants, resulting in shorter, sharper campaigns. By comparison, when reviewing declined applicant data, the average duration of these campaigns was 11.3 weeks overall, or 96.4 days.

Time of year

We were also keen to determine if the time of year a campaign was run had any impact on its outcome. Although our analysis covers all campaigns that we supported with a pledge, it does not factor in the open and closure timeframe of the funds, but it is worth noting that both operated over a period of years:

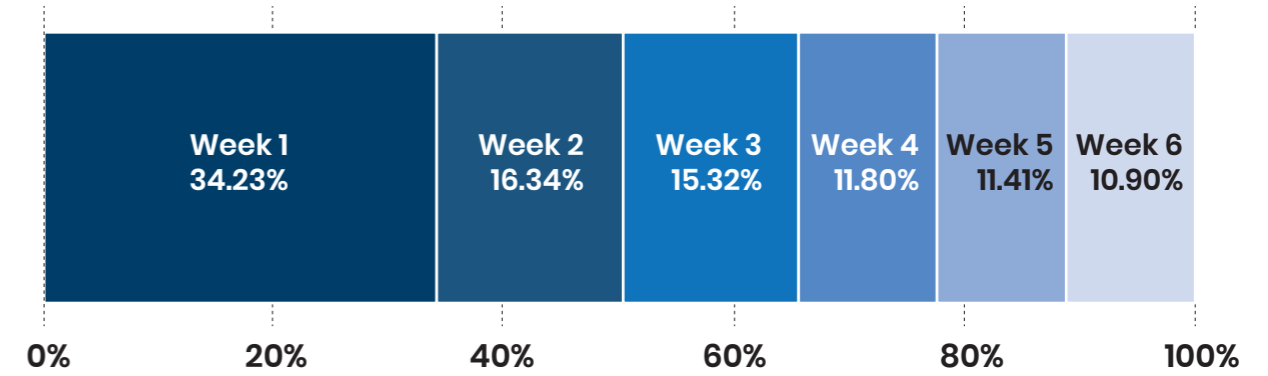
- 'Active Together': launched in May 2020 with the final campaign ending in December 2024 (56 months);
- 'Places and Spaces': launched in November 2021 with the final campaign ending in December 2023 (26 months).

From our data, we found that January was the most popular month for launches, possibly due to post-Christmas activity, while December was the least popular, presumably because of other commitments.

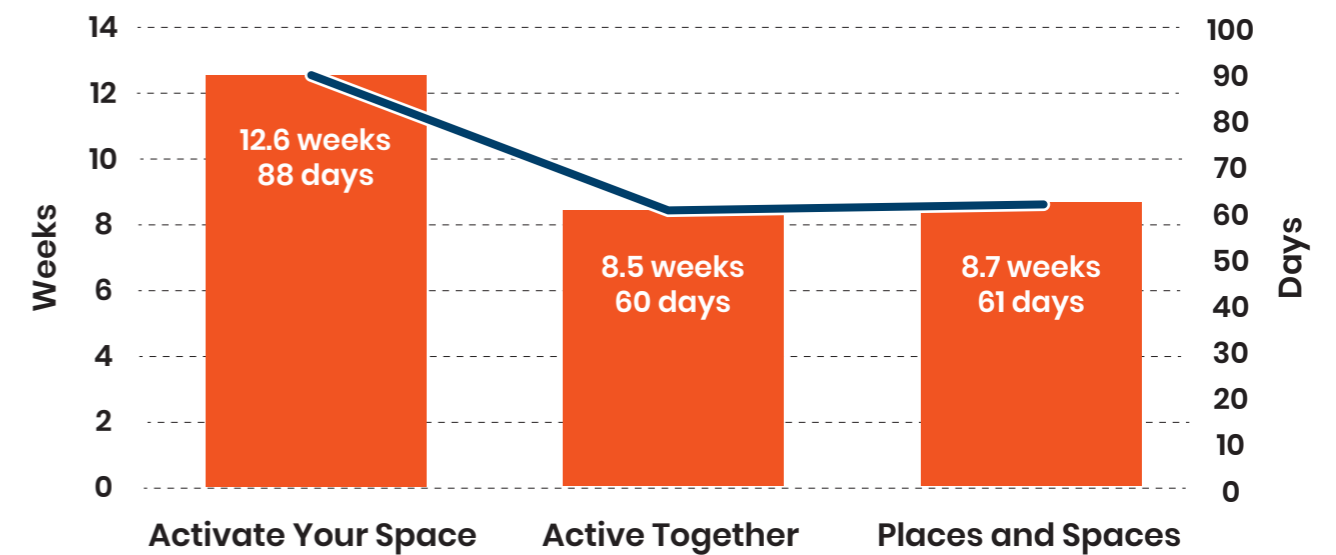
However, looking at the average amount a campaign raised, December was the best month to launch, with some peaks in July and September. May was the worst month and we observed an average difference of £8,579 in the average total amounts raised between projects launched in May and those in December.

Since many supported sports are seasonal, this likely influences the timing of project launches. The summer months of July, August, and September showed a gradual decline in campaign launches, followed by a sharp increase in October. This suggests that summer holidays also impacted the timing of campaigns.

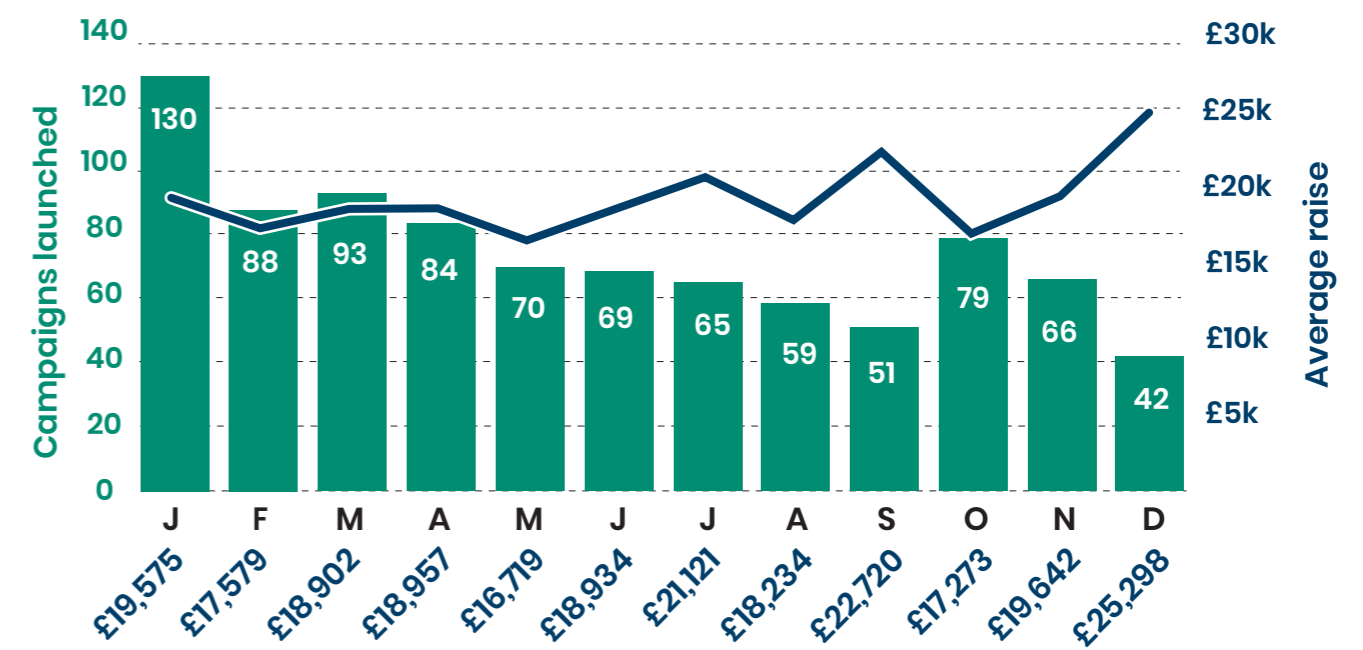
Crowdfunder analysis of all campaigns' crowdfunding over a six-week timeframe



Average campaign length across three of the pilots



Monthly analysis of crowdfunding on supported campaigns across all the pilots



Section 3



The value of data

Collecting data was key to establishing the viability and impact of our crowdfunding model, helping us to shape our approach accordingly.

Data sources and methodologies

In this section we describe the types of data generated, how we collected them and what they told us.

The data that sits behind all the funds falls into five categories:

1. **Campaign data:** held and managed by Crowdfunder.
2. **Application data:** held by Crowdfunder and managed by us.
3. **Decision data:** held and managed by us, shared with Crowdfunder.
4. **Survey data:** held and managed by us, shared with Crowdfunder.
5. **Award data:** held and managed by us, shared publicly.

Campaign data

Crowdfunder offers a reporting tool that enables us to extract information about campaigns and application forms into Microsoft Excel. We collaborated closely with Crowdfunder's data team to ensure that the data fields met our needs, and that any unnecessary, Crowdfunder-specific platform data was excluded.

However, not all tools were available at the start of the pilots, so initially we created workarounds to ensure that data for decision-making, reporting and learning was available.

Application data

Our application forms were designed within the Crowdfunder system and integrated into the workflow and user journey of Crowdfunder customers. The application forms were designed in collaboration with Crowdfunder, with the aim of keeping it simple, asking applicants only what we required in terms of specific data fields (i.e. location, sport etc.) and not focusing too much on project-level detail.

The main reason for this was to ensure that projects focused their efforts on creating strong and effective crowdfunding campaign pages, which told the story of who they were, what they were doing and why.

Similar to our fund eligibility, pledge criteria and grant conditions, application forms were simple and easy to edit, managed by Crowdfunder and immediately implemented without the need for any system downtime. The forms were a mix of standard questions and free-text answers, dropdown boxes or radio button selections.

Once an application was submitted, it became available within our area of the Crowdfunder CRM (the 'Partner Dashboard') so we could see the answers to all questions and download as a standalone PDF, if required. Data from the application as well as the campaign page was then manually added to our decision/reviewers' sheet, ready for the team to begin their review process.

While automation would have been optimal, a lack of integration into our current Grants Management System, due to technical limitations on our side, meant that we had to rely on manual processes. However, extracting a new application and adding it to the sheet took just two to three minutes, with an additional layer of geographic data then added, such as IMD Deciles, parliamentary constituency etc.

Decision data

The decision (or reviewer) sheets we created were all in Microsoft Excel, which enabled us to automate as much of the process as possible. Once a decision was reached on each application, the pledge amount was calculated to establish the correct percentage of the campaign target, factoring in the fund's priorities. Once a campaign closed, we added the amount raised and the number of supporters achieved to provide the numeric outcomes of each campaign.

Survey data

Before we added a pledge to any campaign, we required applicants to complete a short pre-campaign survey via a Survey Monkey link triggered in our pledge offer email. This survey asked some key questions around their awareness, experience and knowledge of crowdfunding, funding and Sport England, their current feelings and expectations, and any fund-specific questions (e.g. for 'Active Together', there were some COVID-19-related questions, for 'Places and Spaces', there were questions around the Commonwealth Games etc).

Eight weeks after a campaign ended, Crowdfunder's CRM system automatically triggered a short post-campaign survey on our behalf. In this survey we asked about applicants' experience and the outcomes of their campaign, as well as questions on confidence levels, their feelings now the campaign was over, as well as providing an opportunity to feedback on the various

aspects of support that may or may not have been utilised and some fund-specific questions.

Completion of both surveys was mandatory and a condition of our grant, resulting in a 100% return across both the 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces' pilots, providing us with a rich set of data which we used not only to evaluate the pilots, but also as an ongoing evidence base to show new applicants what outcomes they might be able to achieve.

Awards data

As part of our commitment to transparent grant-making, we wanted to make sure that we published all our awards publicly. To achieve this, we used areas of the decision sheets to amalgamate all the awards data and report it accurately within the [360 Giving Data Standard](#). All the awards made through the larger, latter two pilots have been published, albeit each record has a zero 'award amount' because of how the investment is termed for Crowdfunder Ltd and the need to avoid double-counting the award. What we pledged, what a campaign achieved, what priorities we felt they met and the URL of the campaign were published in a 'description' field, so that this data can be seen alongside our typical [published funding awards data](#).

Data dashboards

With such a large volume of data consistently generated across all funds, we have been able to create and publish interactive, real-time Power BI dashboards: one for 'Active Together' and one for 'Places and Spaces'. Both dashboards provide data on applications received, levels of fundraising achieved, and pre- and post-survey outcomes, with the 'Active Together' pilot also holding data from webinars.

Updated automatically every morning, these performance dashboards have been crucial to our conversations with internal



and external stakeholders by being able to showcase how effective the funding model has been.

It also allowed us to utilise the data in a meaningful and influential way with applicants. For example, we could explain to a cricket club having reservations about their ability to fundraise that cricket clubs were raising an average of £15,401 from

crowdfunding activities and achieving 143 supporters per campaign. Or, if an applicant was telling us that they felt unable to crowdfund effectively in a particular area, we would point them to a number of other, local campaigns that had successfully done so.

Navigation page and performance dashboard from the 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces' crowdfunding pilots



Navigate to the following tabs:

Applications Who is applying? Who is successful?	Fundraising How much is fundraised? What is the amplification?	Pre Survey Crowdfunding experience	Post Survey Campaign process	Webinar Webinar attendance
		Pre Survey Campaign expectations	Post Survey Feedback	

Applications	Application Tracker
Fundraising	Application Tracker
Organisations	Pre-Campaign Survey
Application	Pre-Campaign Survey
Crowdfunding	Pre-Campaign Survey
Campaign	Post-Campaign Survey
Project	Post-Campaign Survey
Outcomes	Post-Campaign Survey

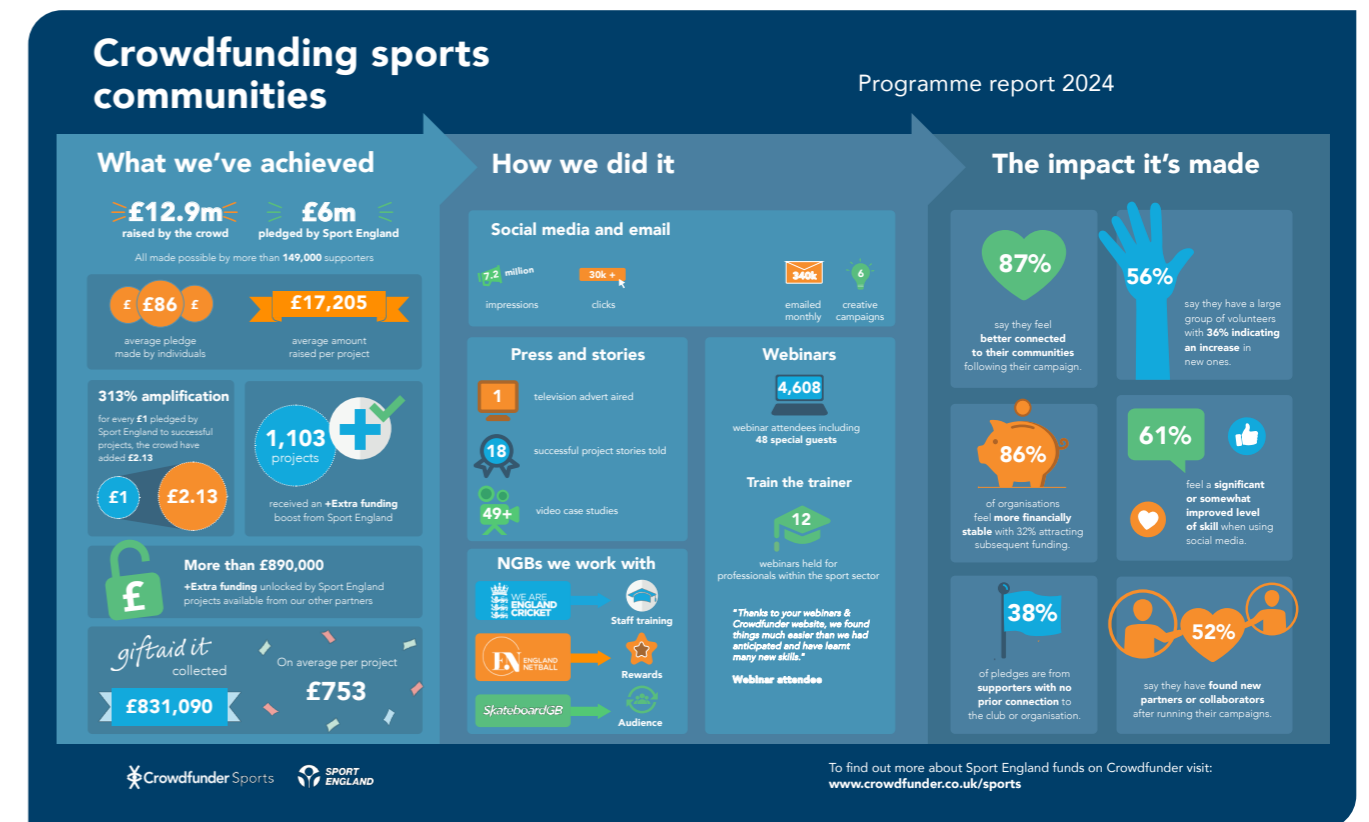


Places and Spaces

Performance Dashboard

Headline data

In this section we share the headline data on Sport England's crowdfunding to date and what lies behind it.



Click on the graphic above to view the enlarged copy on pages 6 and 7

When analysing crowdfunding campaigns and the data we gathered from each pilot, the headline management information is as follows:

- **Success rates (success being defined as a campaign reaching its target);**
- **The amounts raised (either the crowd alone, or the total including our investment);**
- **The number of supporters (a supporter being anyone who donates money to a campaign); and**
- **The value of crowd-generated funding that has been leveraged from funding provided by us (called 'amplification').**



	'Towards An Active Nation'	'Activate Your Space'	'Active Together'	'Places and Spaces'	Totals
#successful campaigns	20	36	894	152	1,103
SE investment	£127,537	£155,000	£4,726,036	£1,051,063	£6,059,636
Crowd raise	£127,537	£418,710	£10,161,468	£2,192,728	£12,900,461
Total raised	£255,074	£573,720	£14,887,522	£3,243,791	£18,960,107
Amplification	£1.00	£2.70	£2.15	£2.09	£2.13
SE %	50%	27%	32%	32%	32%
#Supporters	1,603	7,214	118,207	22,254	149,278
Average supporter pledge £	£79.56	£58.04	£85.96	£98.53	£86.42

When considering success rates, there are three distinct areas:

1. The initial success of an applicant being offered a pledge (grant) from us.
2. The success of any re-review decision.
3. The success of a campaign reaching its target, thereby securing our pledge.

Initial application success

The initial success rate for applicants in the 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces' pilot schemes was 50%. However, recognising the speed at which decisions were made and the time required for some organisations to grasp crowdfunding as a concept, we built in a re-review process for all applicants.

Campaign success

Once a pledge was offered, 98% of campaigns across 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces' were successful in reaching their target. When a campaign reached its target, if there was time still left to run, then a 'stretch target' could be added; on 'Active Together', 99% of campaigns raised amounts beyond their initial target, with an average stretch-target raise of £2,848. Similarly, on 'Places and Spaces', over 99% of campaigns utilised stretch targets to raise funds beyond their initial target, with an average stretch-target raise of £2,882.

Crowdfunding models

Crowdfunder offers customers two types of funding models, namely 'All or nothing'

or 'Keep what you raise' (also called 'Flexible Funding'). The former means that campaigns have to reach their initial target to secure what they raise and failure to do so results in supporter donations being refunded. The latter means that whatever a campaign can raise from their crowd, they keep, regardless of whether they reach their target or not.

We know that an 'All or nothing' model creates a greater sense of urgency, as the community rallies together to try to ensure that a campaign reaches its goal. With the way our pledge criteria worked, by default, every funded project needed to reach its target in order to secure our pledge. The messaging from applicants to their communities was therefore one of 'We need to reach our target, or the Sport England pledge will be lost'.

72% of 'Active Together' projects elected for a 'Keep what you raise' model, with 28% opting for 'All or nothing'. Success rates, average crowd contributions and average crowd pledges for each option were reviewed, and the results showed that marginally higher amounts were raised and that there was greater success on the 'All or nothing' model.

Data analysis on the 'Keep what you raise' and 'All or nothing' funding models in the 'Active Together' pilot.

	Keep what you raise	All or nothing
Number of campaigns	647	248
Success rate	94%	98%
Average crowd contribution	£15,799	£16,740
Average crowd pledge	£128.45	£1032.80
Amount refunded (All or Nothing only)		£18,908



Measuring the wider benefits

The positive outcomes from our crowdfunding pilot schemes extended well beyond the financial benefits.

We assessed the broader benefits of schemes mainly through applicants' pre- and post-campaign surveys. Most survey responses were collected from 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces' applicants, with an extra 25 responses from 'Activate Your Space' applicants.

The very nature of crowdfunding means going out into communities to promote a campaign and by doing so increasing connectivity. This was reflected in one of our key findings that 87% of applicants said that they felt better connected to their communities¹⁰. Running a campaign also highlights an organisation's profile and their work locally, with 86% of respondents indicating that their organisation has a stronger public profile¹¹ as a direct result of running their campaign and 83% feeling like they have built new audiences¹².

The importance of rewards-based crowdfunding and our insistence that campaigns should showcase a variety of rewards, across multiple price points and demonstrating buy-in from local businesses, was illustrated by our findings that 51% of respondents found new partners and collaborators¹³ and 54% indicated that they had built a new donor base actively engaged with their work¹⁴.

There were numerous instances where we saw local businesses coming up with higher-value sponsorship-type rewards or simply donating larger sums as one-off donations. However, the real benefits

¹⁰⁻¹⁷ 1,046 respondents to our post-campaign survey (894 through 'Active Together', 152 through 'Places and Spaces').

were the conversations between local businesses and the organisations that were crowdfunding, increasing levels of local engagement.

36% of respondents indicated that they had received some sort of media coverage, either on television, radio or in print, which further helped to promote campaigns. Financial sustainability was a key aspect of all funds, with 86% of respondents stating that their organisations felt more financially stable following their campaign¹⁵. This was supported by findings that 7% of respondents reported an increase in regular giving¹⁶ and a further 32% indicated that their campaign attracted subsequent funding¹⁷ by using their campaign as part of their evidence base for other funding applications.

A number of projects went on to secure significant investment through the government's [Community Ownership Fund \(COF\)](#), which provided significant capital investment. The graphic below shows a selection of projects that began with a crowdfunding campaign and investment through us but then, utilising this evidence of community need and buy-in, went on to secure additional investments through the COF and other sources due to their overall project costs far exceeding their crowdfunding target.

Examples of successful crowdfunding projects that went onto secure additional funding from the government's Community Ownership Fund (COF) and other sources

Organisation	Our pledge	Total campaign raise	Additional partnership funding
Chinley & Buxworth Community Centre	£7,500	£51,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £490,000 COF £100,000 Derby County Council
Mercia Boxing Club	£7,500	£15,005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £521,000 COF £270,000 Sport England solicitation
Hereford Athletics Track	£10,000	£33,990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £200,000 COF £85,000 Section 106 contribution £70,000 Hereford City Council £70,000 Herefordshire Council £5,000 England Athletics £132,000 Sport England solicitation
Lordsfield Swimming Club	£10,000	£51,726 (inc. £10,000 Sovereign pledge and £5,000 Power to Change pledge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £835,400 COF £20,000 Sport England solicitation
Sennen Cove	£10,000	£26,120 (inc. £5,000 Cornwall Council Climate & Nature Fund pledge and £500 Cornwall Council Community Chest Fund pledge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £372,079 COF £20,256 Cornwall Council Capacity Fund £20,000 Bernard Sunley Foundation
Streatham & Marlborough Cricket Club	£10,000	£26,838	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £706,000 COF
Millbrook Skatepark	£10,000	£61,631 (inc £10,000 British Cycling, £500 Devon and Cornwall Police, £250 Cornwall Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £74,090 COF
Birtley Community Pool	£8,000 £10,000	£23,465 £20,711	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £272,283 COF



“Our successful crowdfunding campaign has been extremely important to our project. Firstly, we raised a significant amount of funds (£23k including £8k from Sport England) from 423 supporters, which has been a key part of our fundraising strategy. Secondly, the crowdfunding campaign has also demonstrated the strength of the local community support for our project to reopen our swimming pool, which has been a key element in other funding applications that we have subsequently submitted, including an application to the Community Ownership Fund at the end of January.”

Volunteers are the backbone of many organisations that we support, so it was very positive to see that 56% of clubs now have a larger group of volunteers and a further 36% saw an increase in the number of volunteers following crowdfunding campaigns. Increased visibility of what an organisation does within a community and the services it provides are likely to have enabled and enhanced volunteering opportunities.

The improved levels of confidence of people involved in running campaigns was also notable. Overall, 49% of respondents felt more confident and empowered¹⁸ following campaigns. Drilling down into specific areas,

the diagram below shows how improved confidence levels varied across different areas of activity.

Some of the additional benefits that were reported on an ad-hoc basis were around improvements in networking, running events, teamwork, project management, motivating people, leadership, building relationships and community engagement – with one respondent stating: “I became a YouTuber!”

Running campaigns boosted people’s confidence in a variety of areas



¹⁸ 1,046 respondents to our post-campaign survey (894 through ‘Active Together’, 152 through ‘Places and Spaces’).





Tracking supporter numbers

Attracting, engaging and retaining supporters were all crucial to the success of crowdfunding campaigns and beyond.

A supporter is defined as a member of the public who pledges their support towards a crowdfunding campaign through a donation or, in the case of rewards-based crowdfunding, purchasing a reward in return for their donation.

All told, our campaigns achieved a total of 149,278 supporters, an average of 135 supporters per campaign. Over two-thirds (68%) of organisations felt they have gained more supporters, 78% indicated that they have built new audiences, and 32% said they have received additional, non-financial support, with 7% reporting an increase in regular giving.

Organisations also reported that 38% of their supporters have no prior connection to their club or organisation, which represents a significant new audience, with a further 53% of organisations feeling that they have built a new donor base who are actively engaged with their work.

Finally, organisations reported a 31% increase in volunteers following the delivery of their campaign and 51% said they had found new partners or collaborators.

Supporters have their own motivations for pledging support, as discussed in the rewards section of this report. Communities are diverse, so bringing in new skills, thinking, behaviours and approaches are among some of the longer-term benefits that we expect to see following a campaign closure.

With a completed crowdfunding campaign, organisations can also utilise the data in their Crowdfunder dashboard to continue engaging with their supporters far beyond the campaign and the delivery of their particular project, with supporters able to opt in or out to receive updates from the organisation as and when they pledge their support.

“The project has at times been tough and brought us out of our comfort zone where we have been in situations we wouldn’t normally be in, such as asking for help from local business organisations/supporters/sponsors etc. I feel as a club we have handled them well and have quite enjoyed speaking to and selling our dream to influential people within our local area, doing podcasts and BBC radio interviews, and even more so, personally being contacted by all three of our professional clubs (two head coaches and one owner). We have worked hard as a club and feel we are now getting the rewards of our labour.”

“We just wanted to say a very big thank you to you and your colleagues for your help and support, both practical and moral, during our crowdfunder. We’re more than delighted with the sum raised but also with the number and range of supporters from the club, community and further afield – including a very surprising and generous donation from the Chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board. That gives us a platform to apply for funding to a range of trusts and councils and a high degree of confidence we will have the nets ready for the next cricket season.”





Customer satisfaction

Providing our applicants with an excellent customer experience was a priority focus across all four pilot schemes.

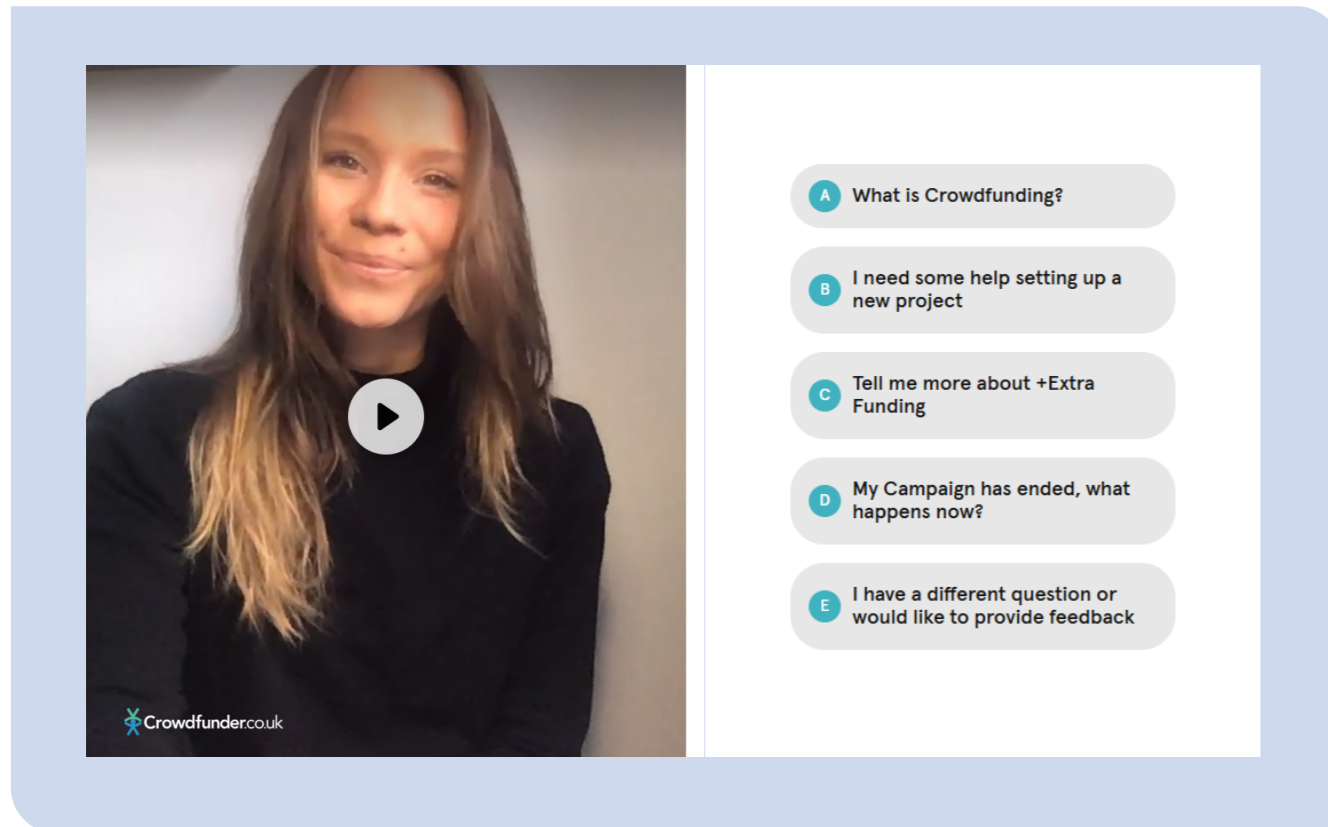
We recognised early on that trying to ‘sell’ the concept of crowdfunding could be challenging, as it was new to many of the people involved in running community organisations. We were therefore keen not only to develop valuable resources that would help applicants overcome any barriers, but also to assess their satisfaction levels throughout the process. We were pleased that customer satisfaction has been a powerful aspect of the four pilots, especially in the latter two. As we gained experience, we grew more comfortable and confident in the advice we were offering.

In the sections that follow we outline the resources we provided and the ‘Crowdfunder Sports’ brand created to support applicants.

VideoAsk

From the outset of ‘Active Together’, we used the [VideoAsk tool](#) to provide a more accessible way of introducing crowdfunding. Embedded on the landing page of both fund pages, it was a simple, additional resource for applicants to click on different headings to answer basic questions. While the full written funding guidance (our ‘eligibility and pledge criteria’) was available, this alternative, engaging and more accessible tool, created by Crowdfunder, was well received, with 85% of those that used it rating it as ‘excellent’ or ‘great’¹⁹.

The VideoAsk tool was an effective way of introducing the concept of crowdfunding to potential applicants



¹⁹ 1,046 respondents to our post-campaign survey (894 through ‘Active Together’, 152 through ‘Places and Spaces’).

Eligibility and pledge criteria information (our ‘funding prospectus’)

It was important to ensure that applicants were not overburdened with information, so the content and tone of the written eligibility and pledge criteria were as light-touch as possible and clear by design, explaining:

- what each respective fund was about;
- what we could and couldn’t fund;
- who and who wasn’t eligible;
- details about funding priorities, while being mindful to ensure all felt able to apply, ensuring we have a truly open, albeit weighted, funding offer;
- how our pledge criteria work, including supporter requirements; and
- basic ‘dos and don’ts’ in relation to eligible and ineligible pledges.

As this document was hosted on Crowdfunder’s website, it allowed us to continually review and clarify aspects as and when queries occurred or changes in criteria were necessary (a necessity during COVID-19). After discussion and agreement, any changes could be actioned instantly with no downtime.

Sport-specific guides were produced to assist applicants on their crowdfunding journeys

²⁰ 1,046 respondents to our post-campaign survey (894 through ‘Active Together’, 152 through ‘Places and Spaces’).

‘Crowdfunding for Sport’ improvement guide

As part of our ongoing commitment to achieve greater awareness of crowdfunding as a social investment model within our sector, we worked with Crowdfunder to create a sport-specific guidance document called ‘Crowdfunding for Sport’.

This nine-page document covered some of the key areas that applicants should consider when building their campaign page, such as writing text, adding images, creating a video, adding rewards, providing updates and the use of social media and QR codes. This guide, which has gone through a few iterations, has grown and been enhanced following continual feedback. It was a valuable tool for applicants and we signposted it on every submission acknowledgement email. 84% of applicants that used the guide rated it as ‘excellent’ or ‘great’²⁰.





One-to-one coaching support

As part of our paid-for services from Crowdfunder, 80 hours of coaching support a month were provided to help applicants develop and deliver their crowdfunding campaigns. High levels of collaboration between our delivery team and Crowdfunder meant that applicant responses and feedback were shared so that we had critical visibility over the types of questions and answers being provided.

This was particularly useful to us as a funder, given our initially limited knowledge of crowdfunding. It helped us to gain a quicker understanding of how crowdfunding works and what language and tone to use. Over time, it allowed us to support our applicants much more effectively, while still being able to call on dedicated resources at Crowdfunder to deal with more system-specific queries (for example, wallet set-up issues or access to the Crowdfunder platform). This, in turn, freed up more time for our teams to provide in-depth support

to the organisations that needed it most, especially those that met our fund priorities.

This joined-up way of working not only helped to upskill our team, build our knowledge and improve our capabilities, it also helped to foster excellent, positive working relationships between Sport England and Crowdfunder.

One particularly useful tool for applicants was the online scheduling tool [Calendly](#). Crowdfunder coaches provided us with a link to their Calendly URL, which we shared with applicants for them to book a one-to-one coaching session. Crowdfunder also established weekly one-to-one video drop-ins for anyone needing to talk through a project, idea or if they were having issues. These were a valuable asset in between the dedicated monthly meetings. 92% of applicants who used the one-to-one coaching rated it as 'excellent' or 'great'²¹ and it was a regular feature in feedback comments in both our pre- and post-campaign surveys.

"I know I've said it a few times but the help Crowdfunder and Sport England provide is first class. The difference between my original draft and now is worlds apart! So thank you again to the whole team!"

"Thanks for the opportunity – our crowdfunding coach was excellent, by the way, she really helped us understand the process which did seem a bit nebulous at times. I would be happy to come along to one of your video workshops to help others understand the process if you needed someone."

"The process from start to finish was excellent and the support top class."

"This is the second time crowdfunding and both times the support and help has been superb – always helpful, prompt – excellent customer service."

²¹ 1,046 respondents to our post-campaign survey (894 through 'Active Together', 152 through 'Places and Spaces').



Section 4



Myths, misconceptions and challenges

In this section, we examine some of the common misunderstandings and barriers to crowdfunding.

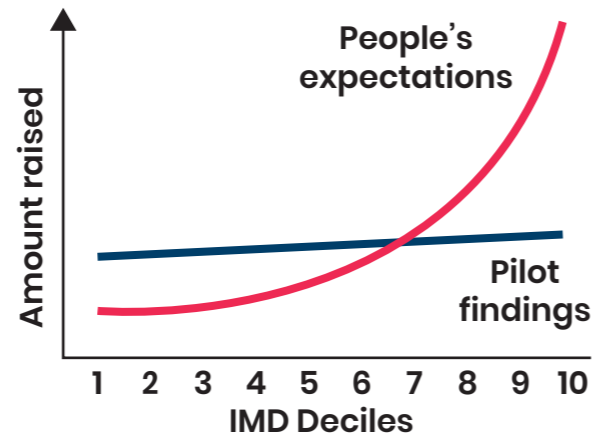
How wealth, location and type of sport impact crowdfunding

Does crowdfunding favour certain income groups, regions or sports over others? We examine the data.

One common misconception is that crowdfunding will not work if an organisation is based in a deprived community because supporters may not have the financial means to support the cause.

We can test this hypothesis because, in each of our campaigns, we identified the IMD Decile in which the organisation operated. We discovered that if we focused solely on the amounts raised by community crowds (not including any match-funding from Sport England), the values were not significantly different across all IMD Deciles and certainly did not demonstrate exponential growth from IMD Deciles 1 through to 10.

The first diagram below shows the difference between people's expectations of how much would be raised across the IMD Deciles and what we actually found from the pilot schemes. The second diagram shows our average investment and the average crowd raise across each IMD Decile for the 'Active Together' scheme.



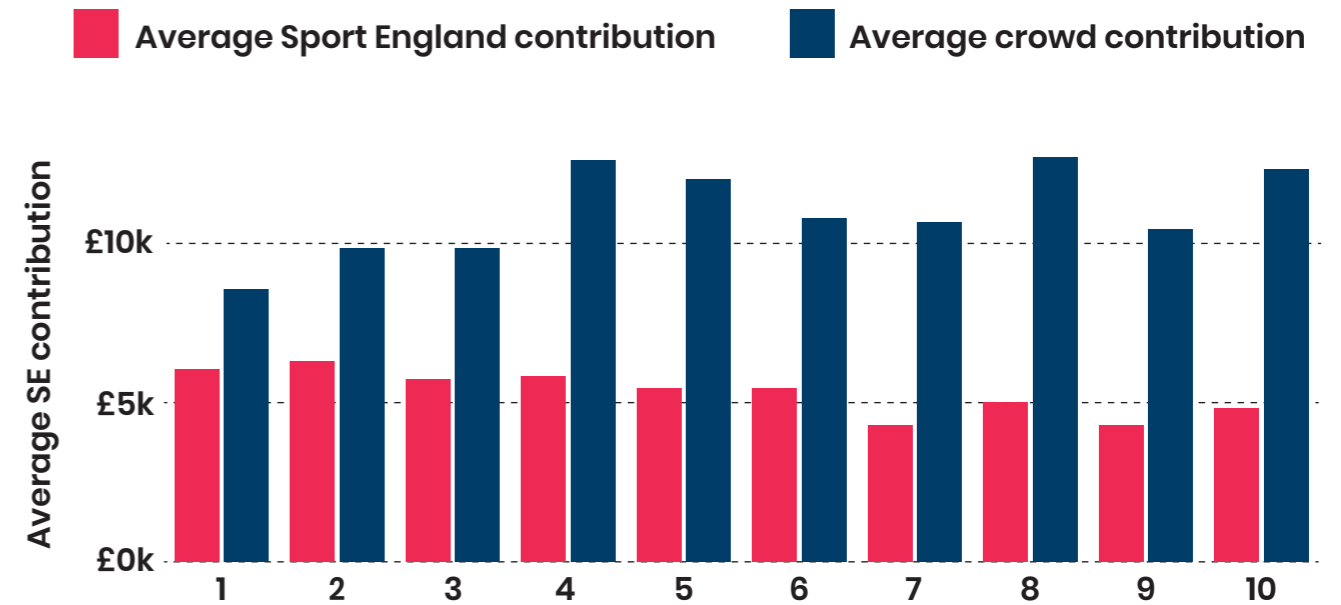
Differences between sports

Across 'Active Together', we supported 58 different sports, providing us with some useful sport-specific data and findings:

- Rugby Union clubs outperformed other sports, with an average campaign raise of £23,043 compared to the overall average for cricket or football (which were still quite impressive at £15,401 and £13,642 respectively).
- The six equestrian projects that we supported had an even higher average raise of £33,467; and
- Skateboarding projects, perhaps due to the additional proactive support of their national governing body (NGB) Skateboard GB, also achieved an above average raise of £25,065.

While some sports achieved larger raises than others, the overall message from our pilot schemes was that, with the right approach and support, all sports can crowdfund effectively.

Campaign numbers and average funds raised by a selection of different sports during the 'Active Together' pilot



Sport	Projects	Total raised	Active Together pledge	Average raised
Cricket	250	£3,850,145	£1,241,664	£15,401
Rugby union	118	£2,719,089	£801,650	£23,043
Multi sports	91	£1,852,388	£544,876	£20,356
Swimming and diving	113	£1,438,986	£500,606	£12,734
Tennis	53	£965,654	£300,434	£18,220
Football	40	£545,697	£187,953	£13,642
Skateboarding	14	£350,908	£107,300	£25,065
Gymnastics	18	£267,313	£99,150	£14,851
Equestrian	6	£200,802	£41,387	£33,467
Bowls	20	£188,599	£70,500	£9,430



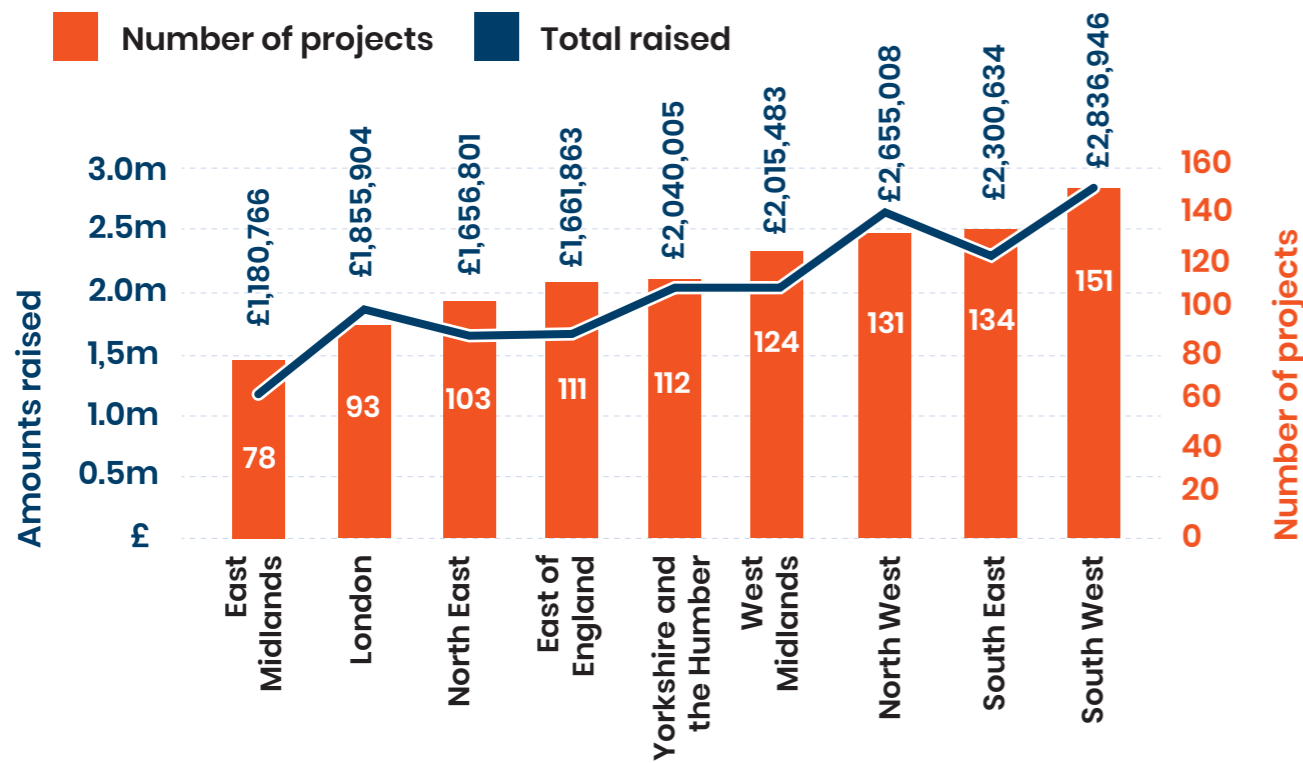
Differences between regions

Geography was another factor which many people perceived would affect the ability to crowdfund effectively. We were also able to test this hypothesis because we supported campaigns across all areas of England, as the map on this page shows.



When looking at project numbers²² and total amounts raised by regions, we found that while there was some variation, the differences were not significant.

Project numbers and funds raised by region across the four crowdfunding pilots



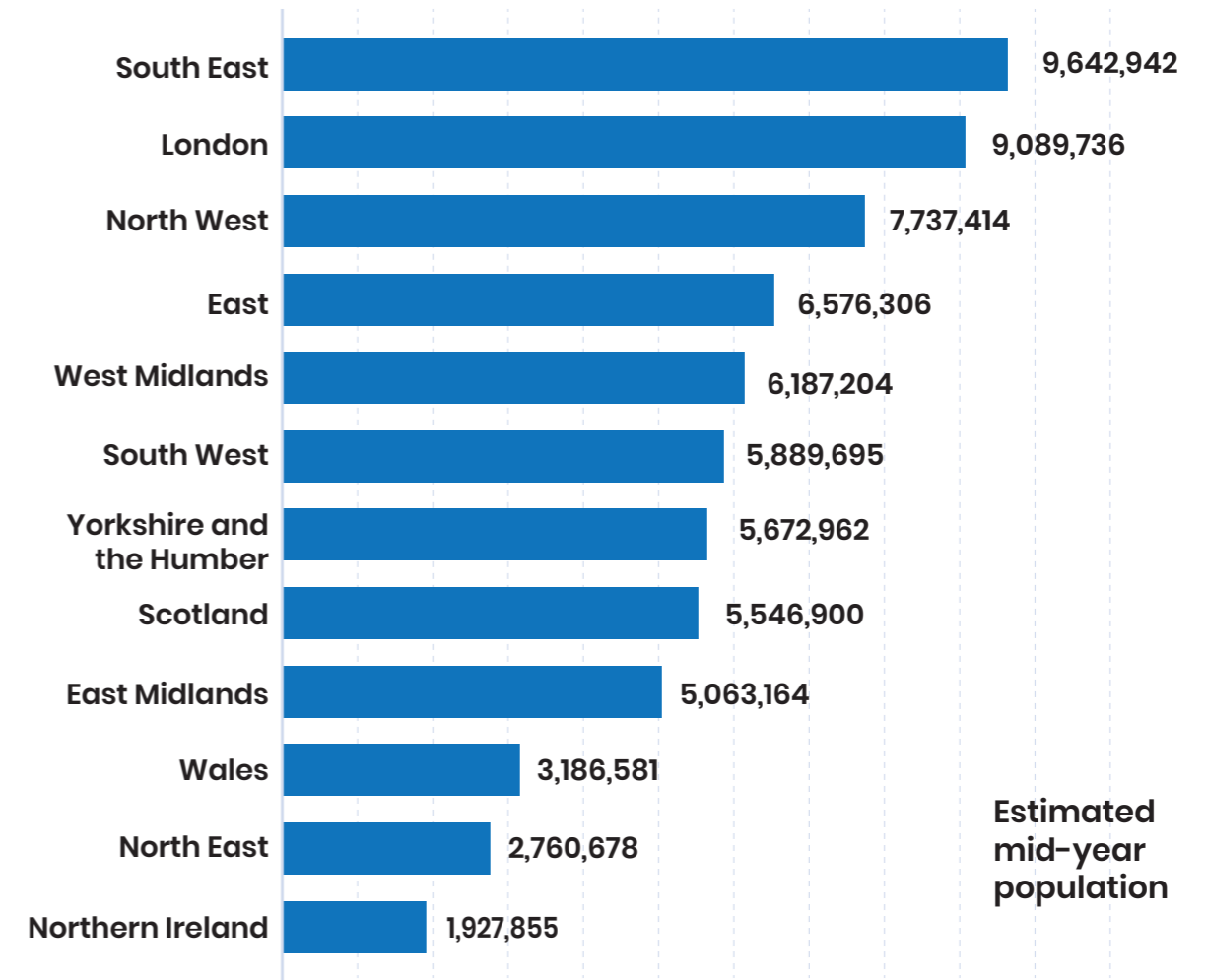
The East Midlands region had both the smallest number of projects and the smallest amount raised in total. However, population density needs to be considered alongside the regional figures. In 2024, North East England had the smallest population numbers in England²³, so we might reasonably expect it to have less projects and fundraising value compared to other, more populous, regions.

When analysing the average raises and the average supporter numbers by region, we found even less differentiation, with all regions successfully achieving on average between £15,000 and £20,000 raises and more than 120 supporters per campaign.

²² 956 projects across 'Activate Your Space', 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces'.

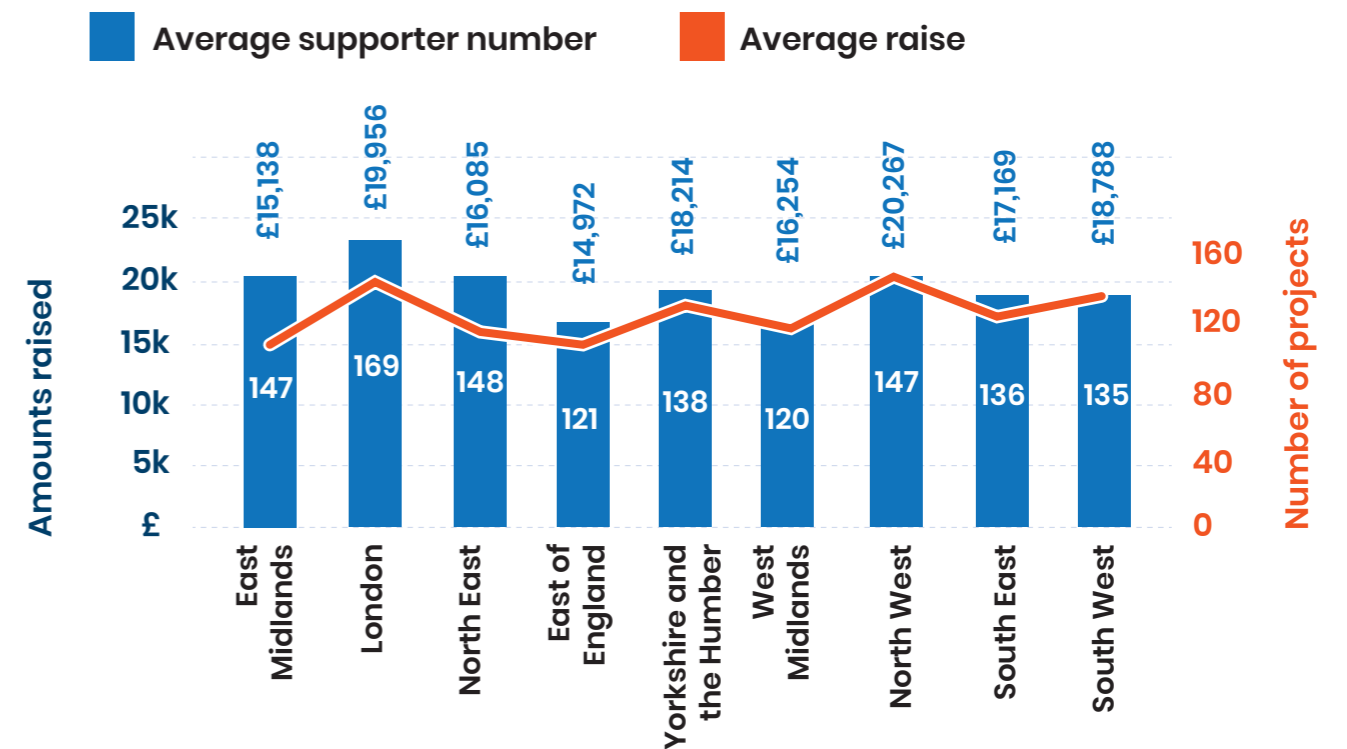
²³ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/294729/uk-population-by-region/>.

Population of the United Kingdom by region in 2024



Estimated mid-year population

Average supporter numbers and fund raised across regions during the pilots





Identifying and addressing the challenges

While experiences throughout the pilot schemes were generally positive, we found some areas for improvement.

Part of our ongoing work during the pilots was promoting crowdfunding to other organisations, including national governing bodies, Active Partnerships, local authorities, and dedicated delivery partners. Engagement following these discussions was generally positive, with many staff attending 'Train the trainer' sessions and increasing their knowledge and skills in supporting campaigns from organisations within their relevant networks.

Attracting and working with other funders

It would, however, have been beneficial to encourage more of these partners to invest their own funding into campaigns, rather than just providing advice and signposting to our own funding. With an almost continually open fund available from Sport England, the incentive for stakeholders to invest their own funding may have been lacking during the pilots. In retrospect, the opportunity to invest jointly might have unlocked further benefits for local communities.

Notwithstanding the above, some of our partners did make other commitments, with England Netball providing 'reward packages' to netball campaigns, as well as producing their own guide for their clubs.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) ran dedicated 'Train the trainer' sessions for their Regional Sports Development staff and Skateboard GB provided lots of promotional material and video creation expertise for

England Netball provided 'reward packages' for netball campaigns as well as producing crowdfunding guides for clubs.



some of the community skateboarding campaigns that we saw. British Cycling also utilised the remainder of its [Places to Ride funding](#) to match-fund against cycling campaigns.

As the 'Crowdfunder Sports' brand continues to grow and more conversations take place, it is hoped that more sport-specific funders will come on board and support community sport and physical activity campaigns alongside Sport England, Sport Wales and Sport Northern Ireland.

Upskilling internal colleagues

The crowdfunding model is very different to grants funding and these differences take time to explain and understand. When introducing new colleagues to the support team delivering the funds, we found that explaining the basics and showing by examples and lived experience were the best methods, because once the model is

understood and the benefits observed, it becomes very clear how beneficial it can be for some organisations.

We found that there was a gradual process of picking up the language, tone and approach, which was learnt and implemented over a period of weeks, and then observing first-hand once a campaign was launched, successfully run, closed and evaluated.

Customisation limitations

Crowdfunder has created an effective and efficient CRM system, which not only supports a broad range of campaigns and organisations, but also multiple different funders. The system is constantly being improved and updated and we had the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions on improvements throughout the pilots.

However, as with any complex system that needs to work with multiple users, there were some minor limitations which required an additional layer of manual work. For example, if we declined an application, the applicant received a generic email response. Here, it would have been more helpful if a tailored email message had been automatically triggered to explain our re-review process. This would have removed the need for us to follow up a declined outcome with a manual, direct email.

Internal promotion and comms

Getting full buy-in from other teams at Sport England on the benefits of crowdfunding required considerable effort. While these efforts paid off overall and attendance at webinars was strong, there was perhaps more that could have been done from a promotional aspect. Given that the model is both new and innovative, with a lot of it requiring constant promotion to embed it into everyday language and discussions, having a dedicated resource throughout the funds may have enabled us to reach

more audiences and ultimately support more campaigns.

The greater collaboration we enjoyed with dedicated colleagues in our digital, marketing and communications team during the last two years of the pilots illustrated the value of this support.

Responses to tipping

When supporters make a pledge on a Crowdfunder campaign, donors are presented with a default 'tip' % value on their donation. The tip amount is displayed clearly to the supporter before they finalise their donation, but this can be missed. While this can be made 'zero' by the supporter and they are not obliged to provide a tip, feedback from some applicants identified this as a negative feature, providing an additional burden on donors. Tipping is, however, a common feature on all crowdfunding platforms, with funds raised from tips going towards the ongoing maintenance of the site and future development.

Wallet set-up and customer support

During the delivery of the last two pilots, there were concerns raised from a small number of applicants who were struggling with setting up their +Extra Funding wallets, resulting in delays in receiving our pledge.

Crowdfunder worked closely with us on these issues and improved their online guidance and support to ensure that the steps applicants needed to go through to complete their wallet set-up resulted in a more seamless and positive experience.

Live match-funding

When beginning our crowdfunder investments, we opted for a 'bridging' model of crowdfunding – this is when we pledge our grant conditionally, which is then secured once conditions are met.



Live match-funding is a newer method of crowdfunding whereby funding is added to a page on a continual basis, i.e. a supporter pledges £50, the funder releases £50. It is believed to be a more motivational way to invest, for the organisation as well as the supporter. Unfortunately, we could not use live match-funding due to the different scale of pledges that we provided (30%-50%, depending on different priorities). It would have been good to be able to test this method as, from a funders' brand recognition, it may have been more effective as each pledge from a community supporter was matched on a one-to-one basis, until a limit was reached. Hopefully the system that Crowdfunder has created will continue to evolve to allow for differentials in pledge criteria.

Increasing targets

Crowdfunder's system allows for the target amount of a campaign to be increased once the campaign is underway. However, at a programme level, we opted not to increase our pledge amount from the target originally agreed. This was because our objective was to meet the immediate needs of a project. Crowdfunding by its very nature often surpasses the initial targets, which is great for an organisation and its financial sustainability and allows them to focus surplus funds raised into secondary priority projects as and when they can.

Funding threshold

We opted for a £10,000 limit on our grant investment, mostly due to our own internal criteria around governance requirements and funding thresholds, but also because we felt that increasing our pledge values could result in additional pressure on organisations. In addition, implementing a threshold increase part-way through any of the pilot funds would not have been fair on campaigns and projects that had crowdfunded prior to any increase.

It is worth noting that Sport England's Movement Fund on launching had a maximum threshold of £15,000, which could increase in future iterations. However, we are also aware of the risk that organisations may set overly ambitious crowdfunding targets to secure the highest possible level of grant. The additional risk here is that, because an organisation must reach their crowdfunding target to secure a grant, an organisation which sets unrealistic targets may end up with no grant at all.

Fees

Every crowdfunding platform charges fees to cover transaction fees and help towards the running costs of the platform. A thorough cost benefit analysis has not been undertaken to compare a funding programme operated through a crowdfunding model with a traditional grant process model. However, the shorter timeframe required for decision making, increased customer experience, reduced staff resource and significant wider benefits would all need to be taken into account.



Crowdfunding in a changing world

From the COVID-19 pandemic to the cost-of-living crisis, crowdfunding proved resilient and adaptable.

In the 'Active Together' pilot, we managed to shift our priorities from emergency response during the various national lockdowns to a 'Return to Play' agenda, which helped community sport and physical activity organisations to get back on track. This ability to adapt quickly and with minimal effort is one of the many advantages of operating a crowdfunding model that can be easily amended in-house.

During the pilots and beyond, there were a raft of issues facing sports organisations and providers, communities and wider society:

Social issues

- COVID-19
- Cost-of-living crisis
- Vandalism/arson
- Global emergencies
- Political changes.

Environmental issues

- Climate emergencies/flooding/storm relief
- Energy crisis.

Rising to the challenge: active examples

The examples below, from three different sports, highlight some of the issues facing organisations and their responses.

[Rickmansworth CC](#) referenced their high migrant community while also acknowledging climate change and the adaptations they needed to make in terms of their pitch maintenance equipment.

[Aldercar & Langley Mill Hill Amateur Boxing Club's campaign](#) raised funds to aid their recovery from an arson attack. They received insurance money, but due to the cost of living and post-COVID-19 building cost increases, they were left with a significant funding gap.

[Stapleford Skatepark](#) engaged over 1,000 people in free coached skateboarding courses, focusing on lower socio-economic groups (LSEG) (49% girls, 60% from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds), until it had to shut down in 2022 due to anti-social behaviour and vandalism. They turned to us to raise funds to refurbish a new skatepark, having received support from Broxtowe Borough Council, Skate Nottingham and local councillors to improve community wellbeing and business conditions within the town.



Section 5



Payments and risks

Crowdfunding involves multiple payments from many sources, so safely and efficiently managing those payments is vital.

Payment mechanisms and processes

Putting systems in place to release the right funding at the right time.

By the time of the third and fourth pilots, our investment was made directly to Crowdfunder, in the form of a Lottery Funding Agreement. Crowdfunder, as the formal and sole awardee, submitted claims for tranches of funding, capped at £250,000 per claim, which were then allocated within a dedicated Fund Wallet within the Crowdfunder system. It was agreed internally that only drawing down £250,000 at a time would keep the risk profile acceptable.

Once our Fund Wallet had a balance, and a decision to fund any campaign was made, we were able to commit pledges to campaigns using Crowdfunder's Partner Dashboard in its CRM system. Crowdfunder initially added pledges on our behalf and under our instruction, with 'pledge conditions' added to each one. These pledge conditions usually consisted of three specific conditions:

- Campaigns needing to achieve 25% of their overall campaign target themselves;
- Campaigns needing to achieve a set number of unique supporters (25-100, depending on their campaign target); and

- Campaigns needing to reach their target (100%) within the timeframe of their campaign.

Conditions one and two were designed so that once met, they would automatically trigger our pledge appearing in full on a campaign page, providing a boost to the campaign at a critical time and helping to keep the momentum going. Our pledge at this stage would be considered as a 'provisional offer' but once a campaign reached 100% of its target it then secured and 'locked in' our pledge.

Crowdfunding in this way is termed 'bridging'; another model is 'live match funding', where any award amount offered by a funder is added in smaller, continual amounts throughout the life of a campaign and matched against individual supporter pledges (i.e. supporter pledges £10, the funder pledges £10).

Live match-funding is considered a more motivational model because it provides a continual drip-feed of additional funding until the maximum offer amount is reached, and it immediately amplifies whatever value a supporter pledges. However, we could not offer this model. Initially, this was because it was not technically possible and then, once it was established as a potential option midway through our third pilot, because it would not then have worked with our sliding scale of between 30%-50% match-funding pledges.

MangoPay

Once a campaign ends, funds raised by the community crowd are paid out almost instantly. Monies provided by funders like us, however, sit in an escrow wallet, which the applicant can only draw down from when they have created a MangoPay wallet. To create this wallet, additional due diligence checks are required for organisations, including uploading bank statements, governing documentation and ID checks.

MangoPay wallets could be set up while the campaign was still live, helping to speed up the payment of our funding at the end of a successful campaign. We stated in our grant conditions to organisations the requirement to draw down our funds within three months of a campaign closing.

The MangoPay wallet set-up was managed entirely by Crowdfunder on its system, which eased our workload and helped to ensure a consistent approach. It did mean, however, that we were not able to see any of the MangoPay or wallet verification checks being undertaken nor were we able to help if applicants had any difficulties in completing these checks. However, the support team at Crowdfunder were on hand to pick up enquiries and support applicants. Because the Crowdfunder support team were mostly contactable through email and had to manage work across all campaigns on their platform, there was some perception that they were not responsive enough compared to the way that we responded to applicants. In reality, the Crowdfunder support team's response times of typically one or two days were both reasonable and workable.

Difficulties at certain periods with the MangoPay system warranted some intervention to improve the process for applicants and enable them to draw down our funds in a timely manner. This was one of the many strengths of Crowdfunder's commitment to continual improvement. Guidance for applicants was reviewed and

improved, making the user journey through the system more seamless with additional, specific signposting.

We also adjusted our own processes by encouraging applicants to set up wallets at the point when we offered our pledge, which gave them time to work through any issues and minimise delays with our funding payment once a campaign ended.

GiftAid

Gift Aid can be added to crowdfunding donations if the campaign is for a UK-registered charity or has a charitable purpose. This meant that, for those organisations able to take advantage of this scheme, Gift Aid was a further benefit of the crowdfunding process. Across all our pilot schemes, the total amount of potential GiftAid unlocked through supported crowdfunding campaigns was £831,900, or £753 per campaign. Claims to the HMRC are managed entirely by campaign owners, with the ability to create a bespoke GiftAid report as part of the service that Crowdfunder provides to customers. For campaigns that we did not support financially but who still went on to run their own campaigns without our pledge, a further £159,550 in potential claimable GiftAid was recorded.





Risk and campaign spending

With a new funding model to implement and public money at stake, careful risk management was essential.

Given the different objectives and hypotheses that our pilot schemes aimed to test, as well as the unfamiliar investment model of crowdfunding, there was a clear need to understand, identify, and manage risk on our part. Since our funding was only pledged on the condition that the recipient reached a specific number of unique supporters, risk was mitigated to some degree. If funds were misused or projects did not proceed, the organisations would be accountable to that crowd and to us as the funder. With a sliding scale of unique supporters depending entirely on the amount we invested, there was also a proportionate approach to our investment and risk.

Fraud prevention and detection

A unique supporter is defined as a pledge made using a single name, address and payment card. Multiple pledges sharing the same name or email address can only be counted once and will therefore qualify as one unique supporter. The Crowdfunder platform continually checks supporter pledges as they are made, not only to classify as them being unique or otherwise, but also to identify any suspicious pledge patterns or activity.

Crowdfunder has a dedicated anti-fraud team which investigate any anomalies on an ongoing basis and highlighted any issues with us before considering what, action, if any, was required. However, issues in this area were infrequent and, in all instances where concerns were raised, they were resolved through additional due diligence and discussion with applicants.

One such example was a campaign being delivered by a religious organisation. Crowdfunder raised concerns because multiple supporter pledges were made in one evening, all from one IP address. However, further investigation revealed that this community generally approached technology and the internet with caution, often limiting access due to concerns about potential distractions from religious observance. For those reasons and in this instance, the multiple pledges were made using a single laptop at a local community centre. Understanding potential barriers like this was a key learning curve for us as a funder. The group successfully reached their fundraising target and our team visited them to better understand how groups like this operate from a fundraising perspective in a religious community.

Offline funds and anonymous pledges

Other issues involved offline funds being added to campaigns. Although we made it clear that we would not match-fund retrospective amounts raised, nor significant contributions added by the applicant organisations themselves (i.e. adding their own savings or reserves), this information was sometimes missed or misunderstood by applicants.

The nature of many sport and other community organisations is that they run multiple in-person fundraising events, some of which are likely to occur during campaigns. Similarly, a number of campaigns also raised significant donations from individual supporters, often pledged anonymously.

To manage this risk area, we stipulated and requested evidence from applicants for any significant offline pledges in the form of a letter of support from an individual supporter, receipts for offline donations, bank statements showing the dates of any direct payments, and evidence of offline

funds raised at events (for example, photos of the event, receipts from donations, or advertising for the event clearly stating that all funds raised are for the campaign and the particular project).

Any pledges added which were not eligible (for example, a general grant received before the campaign) were not included in the fundraiser and our pledge criteria was adjusted within the Crowdfunder system.

Safety in numbers

Our unique supporter requirements comprised a sliding scale based on our pledge amount:

- Under £5,000 = 25 unique supporters;
- £5,000-£10,000 = 50 unique supporters;
- £10,000-£15,000 = 75 unique supporters; and
- £15,000-£20,000 = 100 unique supporters.

This requirement provided a level of assurance because, put simply, if an

organisation misused money raised from their campaign, they were not only accountable to funders like us, who may have pledged grant funding, but the significant number of unique supporters that their campaign needed to achieve.

The success rate of all funded projects across the pilots was around 99%. In other words, once our pledge was offered, almost all continued to a successful closure and secured our funds. One project failed to happen due to unforeseen planning issues, but the funds were returned and committed to another campaign and all supporters were offered a refund.

Finally, organisations were encouraged to provide 'project updates', including images and videos on their campaign pages, throughout the duration of a campaign. Not only did turn out to be a great engagement tool, but it also provided a level of assurance that we ordinarily ask of projects by requests through ad-hoc surveys or email.



Section 6

Marketing, partnerships and roles

In this section, we examine how our partnership with Crowdfunder helped to develop marketing and promotional collateral, evolve support processes and strengthen delivery.

Marketing and communications

Our collaboration with Crowdfunder played a crucial role in refining our approach to the marketing and promotion of campaigns.

Regular meetings between delivery teams at Sport England and Crowdfunder helped us to constantly review, improve and adapt our approach, especially during 'Active Together', which took place amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Marketing and promotion of the funds were crucial elements of the various pilots, with social media marketing and the creation of assets acting as key driving forces. The evolution of 'Crowdfunder Sports' as a brand was a gradual process as more and more campaigns were created, ran and were successful. The collaborative approach between communications colleagues, both internally at Sport England as well as at Crowdfunder, was important to ensure consistent messaging to potential applicants across the pilots.

As referenced elsewhere in this report, each pilot phase benefited from our collaborative relationship with Crowdfunder. Utilising their communication and marketing in-house expertise, the level of media content output

increased during the four pilots. However, this was predominantly down to us learning what the sector responded well to by measuring interactions with applicants, which then led to further campaigns.

The media content evolved as we built our relationship with Crowdfunder. Initially, this was challenging as there was a turnover of staff at both organisations during the early stages of the pilots. However, the focus of the pandemic, followed quickly by the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, allowed us to tailor our approach to create targeted content, while also capitalising on additional public interest.

Throughout the pilots, Crowdfunder delivered extensive marketing collateral. The marketing was promoted across multiple channels to ensure full coverage, reaching out to new leads as well as talking to those already interacting with the match-funding programme.

As the pilots progressed, the style of content evolved to focus on:

- paid social media – targeted (low IMD Decile postcode areas/low applicant hotspots) Facebook ads vs, in the later pilots, focusing on Instagram as a platform;
- sport-specific images vs originally using 'general' sports imagery;
- scheduling tailored around the sporting calendar;



- case studies;
 - evolving to short, consumable video clips;
 - monthly mailouts to potential supporters who engaged with the campaigns;
 - organic social media (general fund promotion, webinar promotion, hashtags) i.e. the #ReturnToPlay GIF campaign. Even though this campaign did not lead to a mass of GIF replies, it increased awareness of the fund with 8,564 impressions;
 - joint media content with Sport England tags/Sport England-created content;
 - sport-specific homepages to create a 'Crowdfunder Sports' movement.
- The use of paid media proved to be very effective in bringing new organisations into the fund who had not previously applied.

Marketing was promoted across multiple channels to ensure maximum reach

Social media and email

- 7.2 million impressions
- 30k+ clicks
- 340k emailed monthly
- 6 creative campaigns

Crowdfunder Sponsored

Has your cricket club been impacted by coronavirus? We're here to help. You could get up to £10,000 in match funding with Sport England. Find out more today about how you can do your bit for your sport. #ActiveTogether

Crowdfunder

Get up to £10,000 for your cricket club

CROWDFUNDER.CO.UK
Up To £10k In Match Funding
#ActiveTogether with Sport England

SIGN UP

Crowdfunding towards an Active Nation

Activate your space

Sport England: Active Together

Sport England Places and Spaces



Sport England and Crowdfunder worked together closely to promote the pilots and support fundraising campaigns



The home of sports crowdfunding

Fundraise for your sports club and access match funding from leading sports partners like Sport England, Sport Wales, and Sport Northern Ireland.



Get +Extra funding from sports match funding grants

With over £10 million in +Extra funding and free webinars and resources, we're here to help you crowdfund successfully and keep your community active.



Up to £15,000

Sport England Movement Fund

Grant funding to improve physical activity opportunities for your community.



Up to £15,000

Sport Wales: A Place for Sport

Sports clubs or community organisations developing for the benefit of the community.



Funding coming soon

SNI: Creating Opportunities Fund

Connect communities to enable more people to take part in sport and physical activity

Promoting in partnership

One of the huge positives of working with Crowdfunder was the resource and support that their delivery team offered. Part of our ongoing agreement with them involved producing a series of marketing materials (creating content, paid Facebook ads, case studies, programme material, webpage design), which was always delivered at pace and was iterative throughout the duration of our partnership.

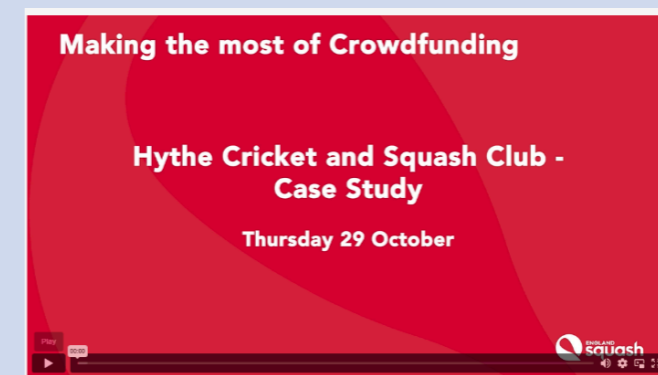
It was identified early on that the use of social media was key in assuring the success of the fund, from both a funder's point of view and also as an applicant. Once a fund launched and the initial channels of communication were utilised (e.g. newsletters, online articles etc), momentum needed to be maintained, with regular and timely social media promotion and constant sharing of event details, activities and case studies, as well as ongoing conversations with internal and external stakeholders.

There were elements of a 'domino effect' as well, with several applicants seeing a local campaign from one organisation and subsequently applying to the fund for their own club.

[Hythe Cricket & Squash Club](#) were one of many organisations who encouraged others in their area or within their sports to start crowdfunding. The project owner of this campaign went on to present at one of our first webinars, as well as acting as a peer support to other campaigns, with [England Squash also using the club as a great example](#) to encourage others to try crowdfunding as an alternative funding source.

Other examples of well-run campaigns included [Otley Lido](#), [Stockport Rugby Club](#) and [Sub C Divers](#) – the latter resulting in a series of campaigns from sub-aqua clubs, aided by an [online article written by their NGB, the British Sub-Aqua Club \(BSAC\), about crowdfunding](#).

The project owner for Hythe Cricket & Squash Club's successful campaign featured in a webinar and also acted as a peer support to other campaigns





Refining messaging

As mentioned previously, crowdfunding was a new and potentially daunting means of fundraising for organisations. As an experienced funder, we wanted to make sure the messages and content we were producing with Crowdfunder were clear and easy to follow, so we produced paid-for social media adverts to draw in applicants. This turned out to be a good, iterative way to publicise the funding to a new audience, while still serving our system partner network, with the ability to @ tag relevant partners.

The social media promotion was complemented by our standard Sport England channels, Active Partnership, system partner newsletters, Sport England website updates, Buddle webinars (a Sport England online learning resource for grassroots clubs and community organisations) and website content. This was added to by the team reaching out and building the skillsets of all the national governing bodies and Active Partnerships to give them the confidence to share across their wider networks as a way to maximise investment opportunities.

This required additional capacity at the beginning of the earlier phases, but it was an important element of building the profile of the funds. For any future crowdfunding opportunities, this initial capacity commitment would not be needed as far more of our partners are up to speed. However, if we were to expand our sustainable funding offers (for example, community shares and match-trading), that initial upskilling of the sector in terms of awareness would be key.

While social media is clearly important in any successful crowdfunding campaign, its importance increased significantly during 'Active Together', which was launched in 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. With everything moving online,

clubs and organisations needed to be innovative and activate users in new ways.

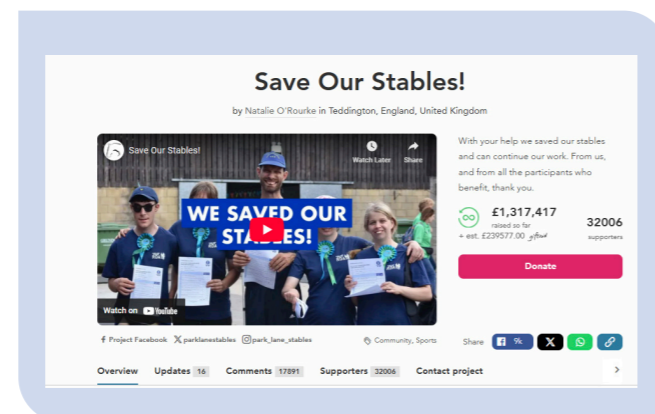
Supporting campaigns without Sport England funding

Social media appeal was also evident across some campaigns we were unable to support, based on our criteria. For example, [Park Lane Stables Riding for the Disabled Association \(RDA\)](#), a registered charity that provides therapeutic horse riding and carriage driving to people with disabilities, raised over £1m to save their stables in Teddington after they were threatened with an eviction notice.

While we were unable to back this campaign financially, due our criteria at the time focusing on COVID-19, we supported the charity with our in-house expertise to help them navigate next steps and become a financially viable organisation to ensure long-term sustainability, while also connecting them to local organisations and supporting them to maximise their exposure.

Park Lane Stables ended up going above and beyond their initial expectations, featuring on BBC and ITV News and garnering attention from high-profile celebrities such as Rob Brydon and Rory Bremner. By the end of their crowdfunding campaign, Park Lane Stables RDA had raised over £1.3m from over 32,000 supporters.

Park Lane Stables RDA's successful crowdfunding raised over £1m to secure their future



This successful campaign meant more than just financial stability. It symbolised a community's determination to protect and preserve a space that embodies compassion, inclusion and transformation.

"We have found a new shirt sponsor for the 2021 as a result of the crowdfunding campaign."

"Since we started crowdfunding, there has been a sense of our pavilion project becoming very real and, most importantly, achievable amongst our existing membership. What is even more pleasing is how we have been able to engage with our local community more effectively. So much so, we have received donations from individuals who are not members, and new sponsorships from local business, which is really exciting."

"...thanks to our wide-reaching social media, we appear to have hooked a very generous benefactor from the States... no direct link with the club but seemed to like our story!"

"We've had amazing engagement from our members, and especially parents of our fledgling junior section, which has been amazing to see and be part of..."

Thanks again for all your help prior to the launch. That was invaluable and the whole thing has been a hugely positive experience for us as a club - and, I think, an eye opener for some of the more sceptical members!"





Learning from feedback

The pilot schemes certainly weren't without challenges and in the first year we saw a real behavioural shift across the sector. However, our initial greater capacity to provide feedback to applicants on how best to market themselves and their campaigns helped build a solid evidence base to share a specific 'how to' guide. As with a lot of the wider programmes, we worked iteratively and in response to user feedback. Over time we developed some simple guidance, with tips to help engage audiences.

Our ability to evolve and update core succinct messages to help applicants have the simplest user journey possible when creating and running a campaign, became a common thread of our work, which was evident in user feedback.

We produced a range of guides and marketing collateral to help applicants promote their crowdfunding campaigns

Click [here](#) to open an enlarged copy

5. Share your campaign across **all** of your social media platforms, using the hashtag **#ActiveTogetherSE**. Feel free to tag ourselves and Crowdfunder into any posts (our handles are below), as well as any other organisation that would be interested, like [The National Lottery Good Causes](#), a [national governing body](#) of your sport or your local [Active Partnership](#). **Not too confident with social media or want to learn more? Then check out Crowdfunder's helpful Social Media Hub, here!**

- **Sport England** - **Twitter:** @Sport_England, **Facebook:** @sportengland, **Instagram:** @officialsportengland,
- **Crowdfunder** - **Twitter, Facebook, Instagram:** @crowdfunderuk
- **Lottery Good Causes** - **Twitter:** @LottoGoodCauses, **Facebook:** @LotteryGoodCauses, **Instagram:** @nationallotterygoodcauses

Social media hub

As our partnership with Crowdfunder developed, both organisations recognised the importance of social media. Crowdfunder produced a [social media hub](#)

with some useful quick tips for applicants once projects were live. It featured tools and advice on different platforms, a marketing library, hashtags, use of content and GIFs.

Crowdfunder produced a social media hub which featured a series of top tips for applicants.

Instagram
Add your project link to your bio for easy access and use relevant hashtags to get it seen by people outside of your immediate network. Got more than one link? No worries, we suggest using something like 'Link Tree'!

Facebook
Keep sharing your project with your friends and get them to share it too. Don't forget, Facebook recommends using video content that's over 3 minutes long.

X / Twitter
With only 280 characters, make sure to be clear and concise with your messaging. Use hashtags and tag people in your posts.

LinkedIn
Utilise your professional network and ask them to spread the word about your project.

Email
Emailing your network can be a great way to garner support for your project and tell your story.

TikTok
Taking social media by storm, TikTok's video content can help you tell your story in a fun and vibrant way.

Messaging
What better way to spread your message than by appealing to people directly. You can use WhatsApp, Facebook, or any other messaging service to tell your story.

All
Post, post and post again. Shout from the rooftops about what you're doing and why you're doing it.



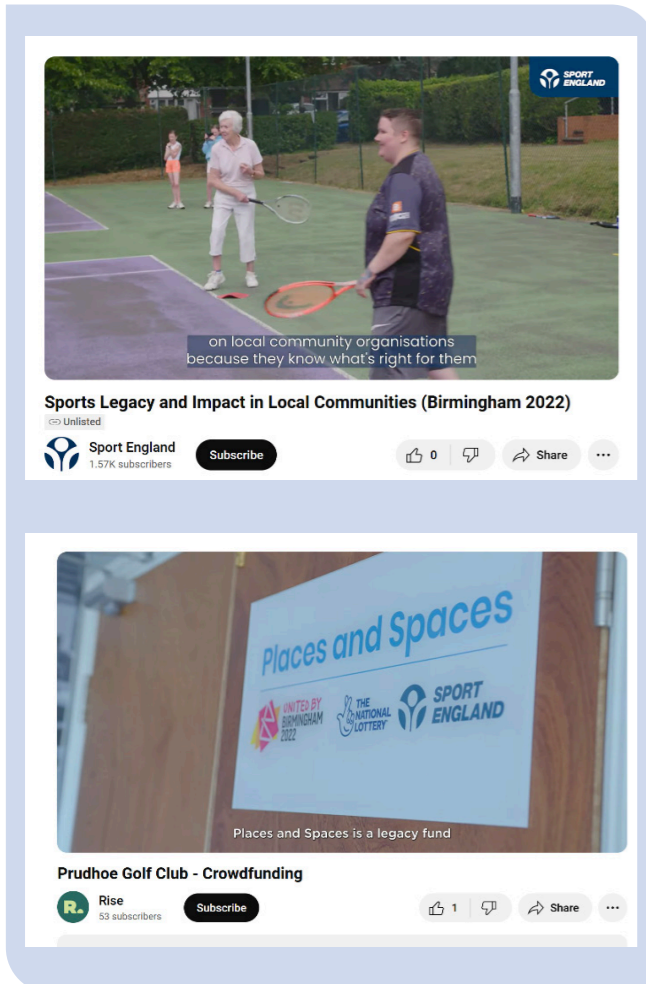


Case studies

Over the years we have built an excellent bank of case studies featuring a huge range of organisations and different types of projects. This enabled us to clearly articulate how easy and successful crowdfunding can be for the sport and physical activity sector. We found that having visual examples of success stories really resonated with our audience.

Here are some of the case studies:

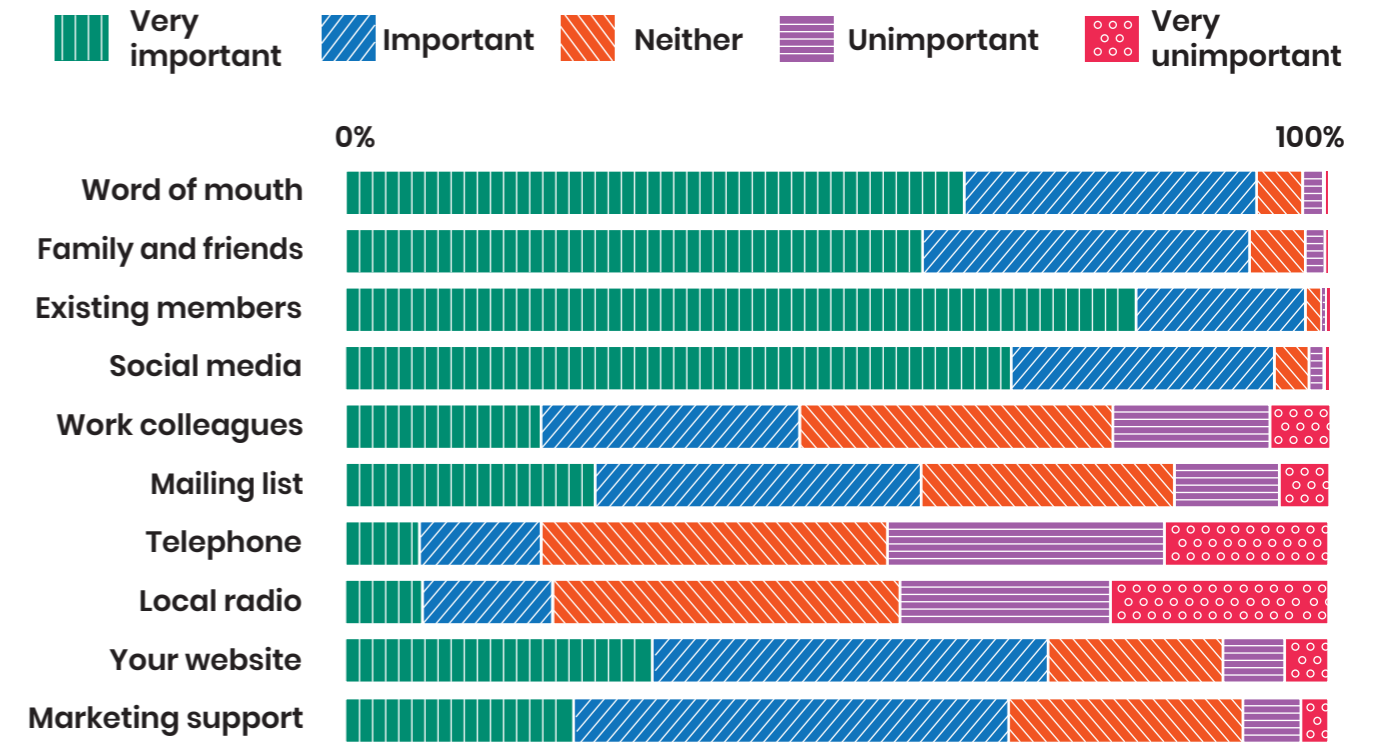
- [Newquay AFC](#)
- [Luton Town and Indians Cricket Club](#)
- [The Otley Lido](#)
- [Westhoughton Lions RFC](#)
- [Kidsgrove Sports Centre](#)
- [Spiral Freerun](#)
- [This Girl's Ability](#)
- [Chinley & Buxworth Community Centre](#)
- [York RI AFC](#)
- [Loughborough Carillon Cricket Club](#)
- [South Shields Cricket Club](#)
- [Roe Green Tennis Club](#)



Sport England's bank of case studies and video content helped to promote the potential of crowdfunding across the sports and physical activity sector.

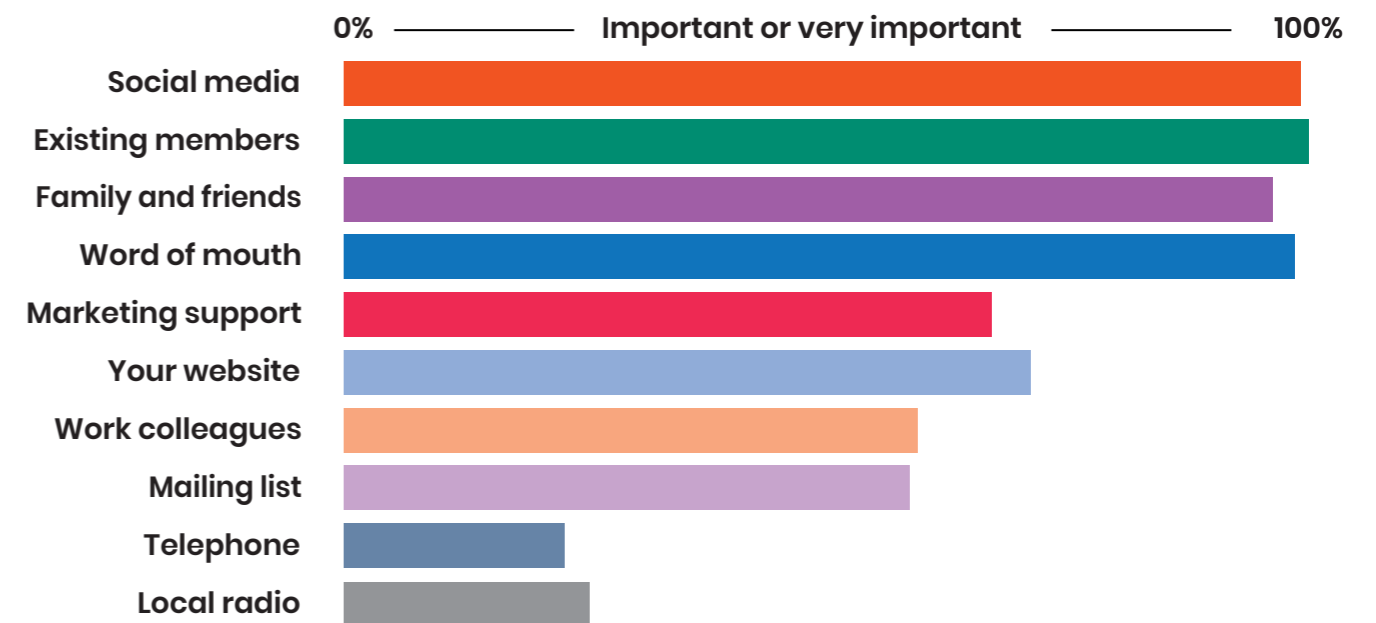
'Active Together' Campaign Promotion²⁴:

How important were the following methods for sharing / promoting your campaign with others?



'Places and Spaces' Campaign Promotion²⁵:

How important were the following methods for sharing / promoting your campaign with others?



Sport England analysis of what applicants found important during their promotions during of the 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces' crowdfunding pilots.

^{24 & 25} 1,046 respondents to our post-campaign survey (894 through 'Active Together', 152 through 'Places and Spaces').



Webinars and their impact

Monthly webinars offered practical support for applications and a space to share best practice.

During our third crowdfunding pilot, 'Active Together', we began running monthly webinars to share advice on crowdfunding and assist current and prospective applicants in improving their campaign pages and management. Peer-to-peer learning has proven to be an effective method for sharing knowledge, so we invited successful project owners to discuss their experiences.

The webinars were hosted by Crowdfunder and followed a simple format: advice about crowdfunding; how to access Sport England funds; a guest speaker outlining their campaign experience and a Q&A session. From November 2021, following advice from Crowdfunder, a Sport England representative joined the webinars to talk about the funds and answer questions specific to the application process.

Number of webinars	Featuring a Sport England speaker	Crowdfunder speaker only
50	31	19

Initially, the webinars were 30 minutes but were subsequently increased to an hour to allow for a longer Q&A session.

In total, there were 4,608 webinar registrations. The annual breakdown is shown below:

Year	Annual number of webinar registrations
2020 ²⁶	1,108
2021	995
2022	1,011
2023	1,259
2024 ²⁷	235

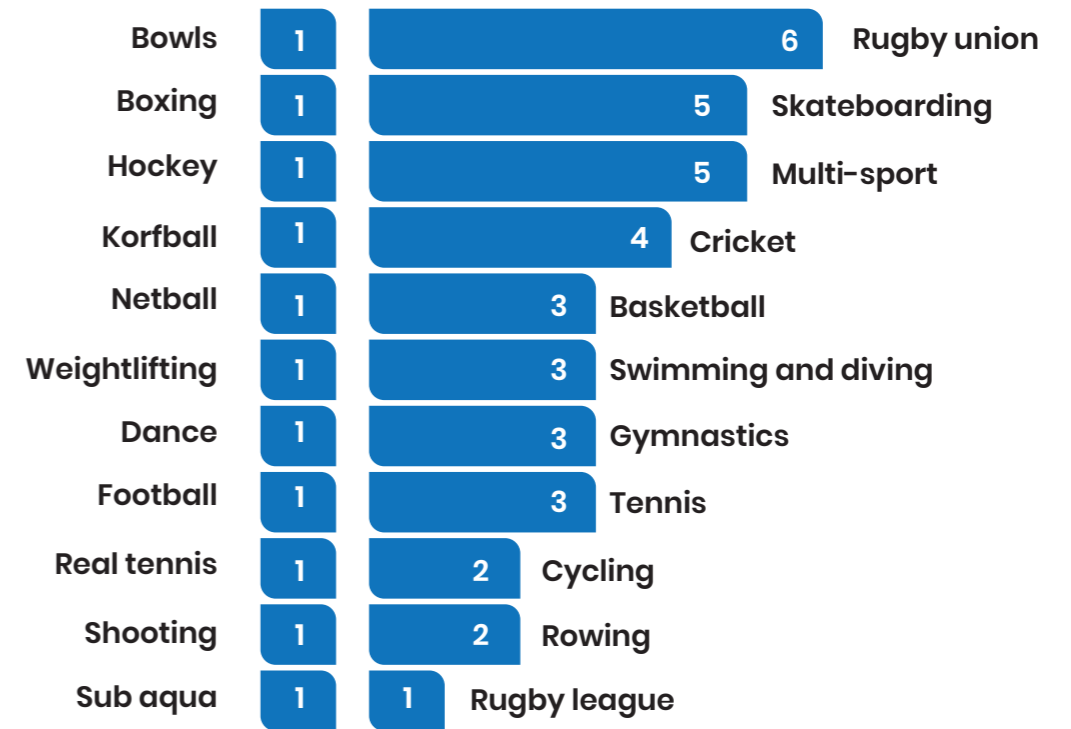
Guest speakers were picked from a pool of successful projects from our first three crowdfunding pilots and when we launched our fourth pilot, 'Places and Spaces', we expanded the pool to include project owners who had received funding through this particular pilot.

The breakdown of webinar guest speakers from the pilots was as follows:

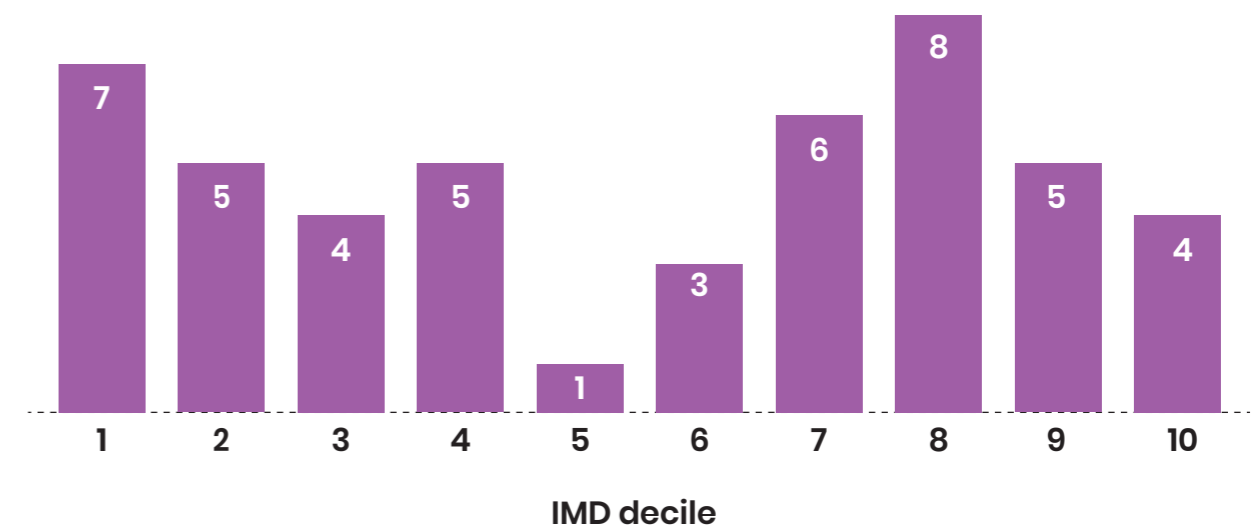
Guest speakers	48
Towards an Active Nation	2
Activate Your Space	2
Active Together	35
Place and Spaces	8
Other	1

Primarily, guest speakers were picked from campaign owners who expressed an interest in appearing in a webinar following their campaign. However, if a major sporting event was upcoming e.g. Wimbledon in July, there was a concerted effort to feature that particular sport.

A breakdown of the webinars by the featured guest speaker's sport



Webinar guest speakers were spread across the country and there was representation from every IMD Decile

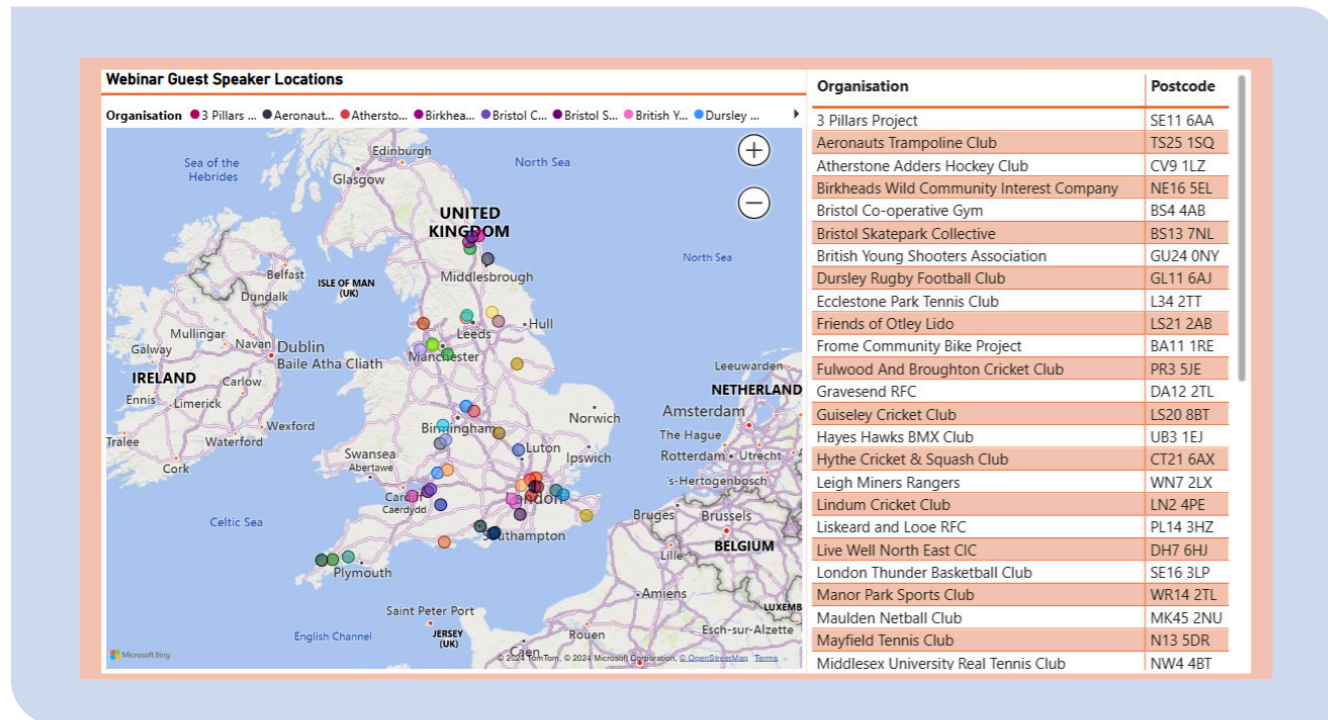


²⁶ Not the full year: May to December only.

²⁷ Not the full year: January to May only.



Click on the image below for a more detailed exploration of our guest speakers' locations and their IMD Deciles



When we first launched our pilots, all clubs and organisations who were successful received the same match pledge, regardless of where they were based and the communities they engaged. However, once we understood how the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected culturally diverse communities, disabled people and clubs/organisations in IMDs Deciles 1-3, we moved to a weighted scale so that we could offer more to priority groups. We also designated older people and younger people as priority groups due to an ongoing decline in their activity and participation rates.

A breakdown of webinars focusing on specific demographics

Demographic	Number of webinars
Older people	0
Culturally diverse communities	1
Disability	1
LSeg	2
Younger people	2
None	42

Crowdfunder provided us with Urchin Tracking Module (UTM) codes for all the webinar and train the trainer sign-up links that we used, which allowed us to effectively track where registrants to each respective session had heard about it. This enabled us to ensure that the promotion of future sessions used the methods that we knew were most effective (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, direct-specific emails etc.).

Here are some quotes from project owners on the effectiveness of our webinars:



“In December last year when we first looked at the possibility of crowdfunding it felt very daunting but, thanks to your webinars and the Crowdfunder website, we found things much easier than we had anticipated and have learnt many new skills. Once again, many thanks to you both for your guidance.”

“Online webinars from Crowdfunder have been very useful and explained the additional benefits that organisations like yourselves can bring. Support from Sport England has been excellent, with lots of tips and advice on what we could change to make our campaign as successful as it can be. Thanks.”

“For us the whole process was very inclusive for club members – we ended up with a project team of 18 people who met weekly on Zoom through the campaign, with an open invitation for any club member to join for an update at any time. A key reason we were able to do that was the very easy access to the Crowdfunder expert guides and webinars, so we could collectively ‘upskill’ ourselves and check out new ideas as we went along. Several of us joined the webinars – Chloe [Crowdfunder Coach] you did a great job!”

“The webinar and helplines have been very supportive. With their help we have produced a credible campaign.”



Training the trainers

'Train the trainer' webinars upskilled professionals so that they could better help community organisations to unlock the potential of crowdfunding.

These sessions, delivered by Crowdfunder, aimed to empower professionals (partners and internal colleagues) with the knowledge and skills needed to assist sports clubs and physical activity providers in establishing and managing crowdfunding campaigns. They also outlined details of our two match-funding offers during the latter two pilots.

In total, 12 sessions were delivered, reaching 534 attendees, with an average sign-up of 28 people, which usually resulted in around 10 attendees on the day. The sessions were recorded and circulated to all those who signed up in case they were unable to make it.

Promoting these webinars was a constant challenge and we worked to ensure that the right networks were targeted and relevant information was shared regularly before each of the sessions.

While sign-ups were lower than we would have liked, it still provided an opportunity for specific training for those who work directly with organisations, helping to raise awareness of crowdfunding as an alternative investment model for funders, as well as showcasing some of the great campaigns.

"I feel much more prepared to support clubs with a Crowdfunder and offer the best advice when reviewing a page."

"I am delivering a session to 20 community organisations this afternoon on Crowdfunder and just wanted to make sure I have covered all the essentials. This is really helpful and timely!! Thanks again"

Other partnership funding and stakeholder engagement

We worked with other funders on the Crowdfunder platform to create additional investment opportunities for organisations.

We are one of many additional funders (termed '+Extra Funders') on the Crowdfunder platform. These range from small trusts, charities and local authorities with a specific geographic focus, through to larger national organisations like Aviva, M&S Energy and British Airways. When eligibility and priorities under these individual funds aligned with our own objectives, it resulted in a collaborative approach to investment, with two or more +Extra Funders being added to what a community crowd raised.

The campaigns that we supported attracted more than £890,000 in additional funding from other funders, enabling a positive outcome for many campaigns, often with the ability to achieve much higher-than-average campaign targets. Crowdfunder established 'round table' meetings between all +Extra Funders, where ideas, learnings and challenges were shared.

Ongoing discussions with other funders and stakeholders provided an opportunity to share our work and the results of our pilots. The ability to demonstrate this with live dashboards throughout the delivery of 'Active Together' and 'Places and Spaces' was an effective tool, providing tailored and relevant information. During the pilots, we engaged with a large number of national governing bodies, Active Partnerships, local authorities and other partners.

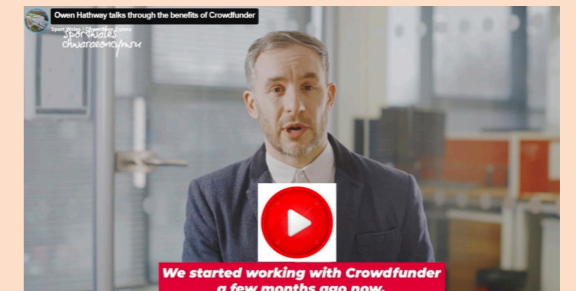
Our engagement with partners helped to amplify the crowdfunding messaging

through their own social media channels. Some created their own web content, helped to promote webinars and celebrated success by promoting case studies, as well as actively engaging with organisations.

In addition, we sought out conversations with other arm's-length bodies after 'Active Together' launched and we began to see the volume of successful campaigns. Sport Wales and Sport Northern Ireland engaged with us, which resulted in them setting up their own crowdfunding initiatives, initially as their own distinct pilots during the COVID-19 pandemic and then embedding them longer term into their funding strategies.

Having those early conversations with both organisations to help them understand the power of crowdfunding, supporting them with the set-up and delivery of their individual programmes and continuing to engage with them both longer term have all been big positives.

Owen Hathaway explains Sport Wales' crowdfunding offer



One of our aspirations was to try and encourage more funders, both public and corporate, to invest their grant funding in this way, creating a truly blended mix of investments from multiple different sources, ultimately to ensure more funding is available to more organisations. A well-attended '[Shape the Future of Community Sports' event took place in the House of Commons](#) in April 2025 to advocate for this model of blended investment.



Partnership with Crowdfunder

Collaboration, continuity and learning underpinned the success of the Sport England-Crowdfunder partnership.

Although our initial relationship with Crowdfunder was strictly that of a supplier and client, it evolved into a genuine partnership due to the people involved and our approach. Emphasising collaboration, innovation, ambition, inclusivity, support, and learning, we benefited from a dedicated, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable team at Crowdfunder, which supported us as a funder to enhance our own capabilities.

With the addition of dedicated 'Crowdfunder coaches' throughout the delivery of these funds, it helped initially with our capacity until the point that we were more able and confident to provide support directly to applicants ourselves. Creating a close

and professional working relationship fostered a genuine attitude of positivity and enabled us to have some open and direct conversations, especially around any new ideas and the continual improvement of processes, tools, resource and ultimately the experience for fund applicants.

Continuity of staff has also been a significant benefit, with the same account manager, head Crowdfunder coach and programme manager involved in the delivery. There has been some rotation of staff in other areas, which required some bedding in and relationship building, but overall, this process has been efficient and fairly smooth.

Fortnightly meetings were quickly established to include the aforementioned staff, as well as those supporting the fund on a day-to-day basis and communications/social media colleagues from both organisations. These one-hour fortnightly meetings incorporated a regular agenda that was structured to make effective use

of attendees' time. For example, comms colleagues joined for the first part of each meeting to provide updates and share learnings but were not expected to remain for the duration of the call, which generally focused on project specific queries, account management and any other issues that needed to be resolved.

Minutes were taken on a shared spreadsheet, with relevant actions logged to ensure everyone had a clear understanding of what tasks needed to be completed between meetings. The close link-up between colleagues at Sport England in the team delivering the fund day-to-day and the team managing the social media and communications for the whole organisation were critical and hugely beneficial.

In addition, a close working relationship was developed between Sport England's and Crowdfunder's marcoms teams, with additional meetings occurring every month to ensure that the messaging and planned marketing activity was aligned

and consistent, especially given the other demands on both teams throughout the year.

The ability to use a shared area within our Sharepoint site was also a key benefit, as was Crowdfunder's ability to provide edit access for us to various documentation they created on Google. Collaborating on copy in this way resulted in a smoother and more efficient process on the creation and co-design of documentation. By using Crowdfunder's dedicated CRM system, communication at a project level was also possible thanks to the 'notes' section of each record, whereby information could be shared and made available if required, providing a full audit trail of any discussions with applicants and actions agreed.





Local activator roles

The creation of new, locally based roles boosted awareness, support and campaign success.

During the delivery of 'Places and Spaces', we recruited three additional team members to work within the Active Partnership areas (two in the West Midlands and one in the North East of England).

The roles were created after feedback from our Active Partnerships in these regions. This additional resource was intended to:

- raise awareness locally of what crowdfunding was and become confident advocates for this model of fundraising;
- support organisations at a local level on their crowdfunding journey, providing pre/during/post-campaign support;
- signpost and support organisations locally with the development of their project(s) and idea(s);

- source campaigns to encourage crowdfunding as a viable option;
- signpost and promote the resources available locally through their Active Partnership to community organisations, especially the monthly Crowdfunder Sports webinars, including newsletters, social media platforms and local/regional events;
- upskill and share the crowdfunding investment model within their respective Active Partnerships and other professional networks;
- create lasting and relevant resource for utilisation at a local level;
- join the reviewers in discussing and deciding on applications; and
- provide feedback, learning and insights to us on local successes, challenges and areas to further develop or improve crowdfunding.

Webinar sign up rate:

Strong evidence of increased sign ups.

Nick's individual UTM code was the most successful at converting views to sign ups.

Impact of supporting officer on Project Success rate:

A small positive improvement on the number of projects awarded.

Impact of Commonwealth Games on sign up rate:

Little evidence of a correlation between the Birmingham Commonwealth Games legacy and the Places and Spaces applications.

Visibility of Places and Spaces:

Small improvements in awareness within each Active Partnership of the Places and Spaces programme due to stronger relationships from the supporting officer.

A separate evaluation took place on utilising local activators in this way, with the headline findings indicating that:

- Prior to Nick starting his role at Think Active (the Active partnership in the West Midlands region which promotes sport, physical activity and movement to transform lives), there were 135 sign-ups to the crowdfunding webinars across all three Active Partnerships; however, webinar registrations from September 2022 to November 2023 were up 68%, with a total of 227 registrations.
- Jacky at Sport Birmingham (an organisation which focuses on getting people more active across the city) regularly called and visited local organisations to provide support and guide those who were less confident in the crowdfunding process. For the duration of live campaigns, she kept in regular contact with project owners to further assist and motivate.

- Jacky also recognised that a lack of technology skills and an online digital presence represented key barriers in the process for some organisations. She proactively reached out to these organisations and went that extra mile by providing regular communication and sessions on this topic.
- Jack at Rise (the Active Partnership for the North East of England) worked well with his colleagues in their communications team, ensuring their own website showcased what crowdfunding was and how local organisations could benefit from it, with the creation of a [video case study for Prudhoe Golf Club](#).

Finally, the local activators identified that the most successful projects had strong ideas, clear visions and had planned their campaigns in advance. These campaigns often also had a clear need and offered both internal and external rewards. Identifying the strengths or weaknesses of campaigns early on was an important way of ensuring that the activators' time was used most effectively.





Conclusions and the road ahead

Here, we summarise our learnings from the pilot schemes and identify opportunities to embed crowdfunding within Sport England's funding model.

Conclusions

We found clear evidence that rewards-based crowdfunding is a powerful and adaptable tool for supporting the sport and physical activity sector.

Over a series of evolving pilot initiatives from 2018 to 2024, we tested a wide range of hypotheses related to sector fit, process design, community engagement, emergency response, and scalability. The outcomes strongly support the viability of crowdfunding as a long-term funding mechanism. At the start of this project, we set out to ask the questions listed below. Here, we share the answers to those questions:

1. Can crowdfunding work in our sector?

Yes – the evaluation of the pilots confirmed that crowdfunding can work effectively in the sport and physical activity sector. Over 1,000 successful campaigns raised nearly £19 million, with a strong average return on investment (£2.13 for every £1 Sport England invested). The pilots showed that, with the right support, organisations in our sector can run compelling fundraising campaigns that generate meaningful community and financial outcomes.

2. What are the processes and mechanisms involved?

The pilots identified several key mechanisms for success – rewards-based incentives, match-funding, digital storytelling and

targeted training in digital marketing. Additionally, the need for resource allocation for Sport England – particularly with regard to staff time and upskilling – was highlighted, as well as improved customer experience for organisations in the sport and physical activity sector, not only in terms of a much more efficient turnaround time for decisions from us, but also the developmental approach that this methodology has allowed us to provide. Crowdfunding is resource-intensive, but our pilots showed that it is manageable and impactful when supported by structured training and guidance and is deliverable by a small but dedicated team.

3. What are supporters' motivations behind supporting crowdfunding campaigns?

Supporters were primarily motivated by tangible rewards, community impact, and personal connections to the various causes. The high average pledge of almost £87 and the 22,000+ rewards offered, illustrated strong levels of local engagement and a willingness to support community projects. Relationships formed with local businesses by organisations and new sponsorships further confirmed the importance of community buy-in to the process.

4. Can we identify and support less traditionally supported organisations and/or projects that still impact on sport and physical activity outcomes?

Yes – the pilots reached a wider range of community groups beyond traditional

sports clubs, particularly through our 'Activate Your Space' and 'Places and Spaces' initiatives. A sliding-scale funding model helped target underrepresented and disadvantaged communities, providing equitable support while still meeting the broader outcomes of Sport England's Community Asset Fund programme.

5. Can emergency funding be provided and adapted flexibly over time?

The 'Active Together' pilot, developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, showed that crowdfunding could be rapidly deployed as an emergency funding tool. Its flexibility enabled timely support for organisations facing acute financial challenges. The adaptability of crowdfunding was demonstrated through evolving support models and shifting match-funding criteria to reflect community needs.

6. Can we scale up a crowdfunding offer to a much greater number of organisations?

The pilots successfully scaled the offer, culminating in over 1,000 campaigns. The integration of crowdfunding into Sport England's Movement Fund confirmed its scalability and long-term relevance. However, the ongoing collaboration and seamless transition of knowledge and expertise were critical to the pilots' success and ensured the consistent training, support structures, tools and positive approaches to enable successful crowdfunding on a wider scale.

7. Can we test a phased geographic approach, starting in the West Midlands?

A phased geographic roll-out was successfully tested in the fourth pilot, with early efforts in the West Midlands informing a broader national strategy. This approach

allowed for regional learning, adaptation, and refinement prior to scaling.

8. Can we provide additional elements of solicited grant funding to projects following successful crowdfunding campaigns?

Solicited grant funding was successfully provided in conjunction with crowdfunding in several cases, and this dual-funding model was effective in supporting long-term project development, investment into larger projects and ongoing positive relationships between Sport England and the organisations delivering the projects. Crowdfunding evidenced both community need and buy-in, creating incentivised quality campaigns and helped bridge funding gaps and unlock greater benefits for often longer-term community projects.

9. Can we employ dedicated staff to provide localised support and guidance?

Employing three dedicated staff through Active Partnerships was highly effective in delivering place-based support, advocacy and coaching. This localised approach contributed significantly to campaign success, especially among less experienced or digitally excluded organisations.

Summary

Overall, the four Sport England pilots endorsed the role of crowdfunding as a high-impact, community-led funding strategy for sport and physical activity projects. While not applicable to every organisation, the crowdfunding model has proven to be adaptable, scalable, and capable of reaching new audiences and delivering significant financial and social value. These findings have now been embedded in Sport England's Movement Fund strategy, laying the foundations for future innovation and sustainable investment in grassroots sport.



Embedding: transition to Movement Fund

How the lessons learned from our pilot schemes are being scaled and integrated into our wider offer.

In 2024, we transitioned to an ‘open fund’ model, now called the Movement Fund. Key learnings from the pilots have helped shape and inform this new approach by incorporating matched crowdfunding pledges into our broader, ongoing offering.

Since launching in May 2024, applicants to the Movement Fund are now considered either for a traditional grant or a matched pledge on a crowdfunding campaign. This is a significant step towards realising an ambition within Uniting the Movement – Sport England’s 10-year strategy to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity – of providing a ‘single front door’ for applicants to apply for funding.

Embedding this dual model has offered exciting opportunities but has also created some challenges. One of the clear positives carried over from the pilot phases has been the ability to offer quick decisions, hands-on developmental support, and a well-defined user journey. That said, some of the core advantages from the pilots have been more difficult to replicate at scale, due in part to internal processes, policy constraints, and legacy system limitations – particularly within the existing Grants Management System. These challenges have made it harder to fully realise the streamlined, flexible support seen during the pilots.

Progress to date

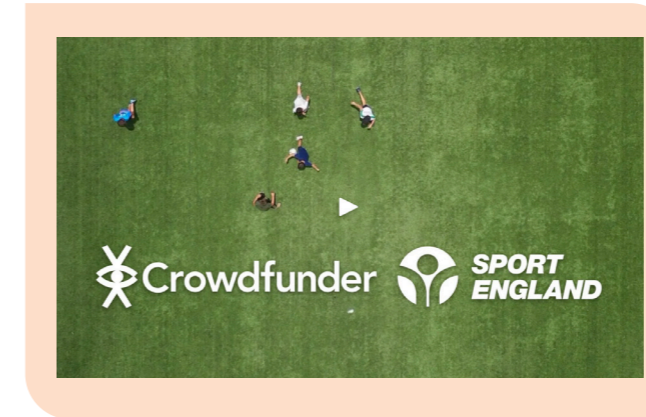
It was anticipated that there would be an initial dip in crowdfunding outcomes as the Movement Fund delivery team adjusted to the mechanisms of this model and developed a working relationship with our delivery partner Crowdfunder. Encouragingly, there have already been improvements to user guidance, with ongoing recommendations from the pilot team to enhance support materials, better identify the key elements of strong campaigns and broaden the recognition of crowdfunding’s value beyond simple financial transactions.

Encouraging organisations to reach beyond their existing networks remains key to unlocking wider community benefits. In this context, a live match-funding model may offer greater engagement potential. While the decision between a grant and a pledge needs careful consideration, we know that challenging organisations to take a more proactive role in their own funding journey is not without its complexities. Nonetheless, the potential for long-term benefits – particularly around capability-building and community engagement – is significant.

Providing this support requires resource from both Sport England and Crowdfunder. However, weighed against the additional funding brought in via crowdfunding, the return on this investment is compelling.

We recognise that many organisations may still prefer a straightforward grant. However, our evaluation demonstrates that crowdfunding not only extends our financial reach, it also allows us to support a wider array of projects. Additionally, it fosters fundraising and digital skills and encourages organisations to strengthen ties with local communities and businesses.

Sport England scores big with Crowdfunder Connect



Looking ahead

Our Movement Fund delivery team will continue to explore and build on the findings and insights captured throughout the pilots. By drawing on this experience, we can continue to evolve our approach to funding, ensuring it is both inclusive and sustainable. Crowdfunding, when implemented effectively, holds considerable promise – not only for broadening financial access – but also for supporting innovative approaches like blended finance and community shares. We believe that our crowdfunding experience and findings mark valuable steps toward a more resilient and community-led funding future.



Glossary

Active Partnership: a network of local organisations across England with a mission to create more opportunities for people to be physically active and live healthier lives.

Amplification: This is the measure used by Crowdfunder to calculate the financial leverage of a funding partner's investment. Amplification is measured as a percentage, i.e. doubling any investment would be 100%, and is calculated by the amount raised in total by a crowd, divided by the contribution invested by a funder.

Awardee: The organisation that is the recipient of grant funding and who is responsible for using it for an agreed purpose.

BAME: stands for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

British Cycling: British Cycling is the national governing body in Great Britain and is responsible for developing the sport from grassroots to elite level.

BSAC: The British Sub-Aqua Club is the national governing body for scuba diving and snorkelling in the UK.

Buddle: a Sport England online learning resource for grassroots clubs and community organisations.

Campaign: An online fundraising page where organisations raise money to support a project by asking a large number of people to contribute small amounts of money. It is a way to access alternative funding sources by leveraging the collective power of a crowd instead of relying on traditional grant.

Community Asset Fund: A Sport England fund which was created to breathe life into community spaces and places. The fund is now closed.

CRM system: A Customer Relationship Management system is a software tool used to manage and analyse interactions with customers, process actions, manage and retain data. It can help to streamline processes and automate certain tasks and actions.

Crowdfunder: Crowdfunder is the UK's leading rewards-based crowdfunding platform that facilitates crowdfunding online.

Crowdfunding: The practice of funding a project or venture by raising money from a large number of people who each contribute a relatively small amount, typically via the internet.

ECB: The England and Wales Cricket Board is the governing body for cricket across England and Wales and is responsible for managing and developing the sport at all levels.

England Netball: The governing body for England's most played female team sport.

England Squash: England's governing body for squash.

Extra funding: Additional funding opportunities for projects, typically from partners that Crowdfunder work with, such as corporate organisations or public sector bodies. These partners may offer to match a portion of the money raised from the crowd, providing a boost to the overall fundraising total.



+ Extra funders: Additional funders on the Crowdfunder platform, ranging from Sport England, small trusts, charities and local authorities through to large private sector organisations such as Aviva, M&S Energy and British Airways.

LSEG: An abbreviation for lower socio-economic groups.

Match-funding: Money provided in the form of a grant award and matched against sums raised by a crowd of supporters.

Movement Fund: Sport England's open fund, which was launched in April 2024 and offers small grants and pledges towards Crowdfunder campaigns. The fund requires an online application form to be completed through Sport England.

NGB: National Governing Body, usually referring to organisations which oversee specific sports at a national level.

Reviewer: A reviewer is a member of the team who, during the pilots, was part of the decision-making process, providing insight that helps to inform discussions and decide outcomes.

Re-review: The process whereby an applicant who has been initially unsuccessful is given an opportunity to respond to feedback, improve their application and potentially access funding through a positive second decision.

Reward: Tangible or intangible items offered to supporters in return for their pledges. Rewards act as incentives to encourage people to donate and can boost a campaign's success.

Rise: The Active Partnership for the North East of England, which uses sports and physical activity to help tackle health, social, economic and environmental inequalities.

Skateboard GB: The National Governing Body for skateboarding in England.

Sport Birmingham: An organisation that works to improve people's lives through sport and physical activity across the city.

Sport Northern Ireland: The national organisation responsible for developing and promoting sport and physical activity in Northern Ireland.

Sport Wales: The national organisation responsible for developing and promoting sport and physical activity in Wales.

Supporter: A supporter is someone (individual, group or business) who pledges financially to a crowdfunding campaign.

Think Active: The Active Partnership for Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire which promotes sports and physical activities in the region to transform people's lives.

Traditional grant: Funding provided through the submission of an application form, which is then assessed and decided on by the funding organisation. Funding is typically provided through the submission of a comprehensive application form, which is then assessed and decided on by the funding organisation through a formal review, usually over a period of weeks.

Unique supporter: A unique supporter is a pledge made using a single name, address and payment card. Multiple pledges sharing the same name or email address are only counted once and therefore only qualify as one unique supporter.

Uniting the Movement: Sport England's 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.

UTM code: Urchin Tracking Module codes are a tool which allow digital marketers to track the effectiveness of digital marketing.



June 2026

Sport England
SportPark
3 Oakwood Drive
Loughborough LE11 3QF

[sportengland.org](https://www.sportengland.org)