

System Partners becoming 'Co-designers' to fundamentally change their approach by working with young people to design and deliver programmes

Sport England's c£700 million investment over 5-years into its partner organisations (called System Partners). The investment aims to reshape the sector and support the ambitions of its 10-year strategy, Uniting the Movement (UTM). The strategy seeks to improve Sport and Physical Activity (SPA) levels and reduce inequalities, whilst ensuring safe and positive experiences for children and young people. This diagram visually represents the story of System Partners' journeys since the beginning of the investment, based on data collected from several System Partners.



CONTEXT AND CONSIDERATIONS



The 'Co-designers' are a varied group of System Partners, including National Partners, NGBs and Active Partnerships.

They are moving from a traditional 'top-down' delivery model to a co-design process that involves young people in decision-making. The goal is to embed the youth voice into their core strategies, governance, and funding processes, although this is still in early stages.

Other influential factors

- Organisational structures influence the extent to which processes can be changed: some organisations are more agile and able to work flexibly and take risks, whereas more established organisations face greater challenges in updating their processes.

Co-design requires time to build the trust needed for honest feedback.

It can be difficult to evidence co-design's value beyond anecdotal evidence, making it a challenge to get universal internal buy-in.

There is a risk that young people will disengage if they feel their input is not being listened to or acted upon.

It is important to be honest with young people about constraints, and be flexible in the co-design approach to engage different people.



SP INVESTMENT



Funding from Sport England has given the 'Co-designers' with the time and space to prioritise, develop and implement these new co-design methods.

MECHANISM(S) OF CHANGE



Shifting from broad consultation to asking specific, targeted questions in environments where young people feel comfortable.

Creating toolkits, resources, and training to equip staff with the knowledge and confidence to effectively co-design with young people.

Proactively seeking a diversity of voices by engaging with young people in various settings like youth clubs and faith-based groups.

Internal champions with relevant expertise (and protected capacity) and supportive leadership willing to take risks.

Involving young people in organisational matters beyond single projects (e.g. funding programmes, developing organisational policies, staff recruitment).

SHORT TERM OUTCOME



For the organisations: they are better able to identify and address barriers to participation, develop new programmes and contribute insights to national and local strategies.

For partners and communities: they are gaining insights to influence positive changes to improve provision for young people.

For young people: they are increasing their confidence and developing new skills.