In March 2018, Northamptonshire More Active, More Often: A Physical Activity & Sport Framework (2018 – 2021) was launched with the overall target of having 12,000 fewer inactive people by 2021. The framework, which was endorsed by Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board and has been adopted by all district and borough councils, outlines key objectives, strategies and fundamental tactics for achieving Northamptonshire’s ambition. One of the nine key tactics is ‘A Top Class Workforce’, recognising that having the right workforce to engage the least active is fundamental.

Insight has shown that the workforce plays an integral part in influencing an individual’s motivation and behaviour to engage in physical activity. Providing the right workforce with the appropriate knowledge and soft skills can all contribute to providing the participant with an enjoyable and meaningful experience; helping to build more resilient habits amongst those who are less active, as well as supporting those who are already active to remain engaged.

There are many different diverse audiences (both demographic and geographic) to engage in great sporting and physical activity experiences. However, the baseline evidence and insight that informed the Framework indicates that there are two particular groups that should be prioritised in Northamptonshire because of the extent of the inequality gap they experience. These priority groups are: people in lower socio-economic groups and people with a limiting disability or illness.

These two groups are currently driving the work of the County Sports Partnership (CSP) and a prioritisation exercise using insight and local intelligence has been conducted to identify 8 ‘hotspot’ target areas where these groups predominate and where additional resource will be focussed. The ambition of this plan is to build, develop and mobilise a workforce with the right soft skills, competencies and understanding of these least active communities within Northamptonshire so that they can engage them in positive and meaningful physical activity experiences.

Involving a broader workforce by connecting with other sectors, such as healthcare professionals, housing officers and other professions who may have contact with the least active will be key. We need to provide this broader workforce with the knowledge and confidence to be able to nudge and influence the least active towards physical activity opportunities.

Building a Workforce for a More Active Northamptonshire sets out the future direction for workforce planning, development and investment across Northamptonshire. The plan will help to guide organisations in the county with their own workforce development plans and initiatives to create a fit for the future workforce within the context of the county Physical Activity and Sport Framework. The main purpose of the plan is to:

- Develop a more customer focussed motivated workforce which will improve the participants experience of physical activity.
- Develop a more diverse workforce with the competencies, behaviours and soft skills to engage more people from under-represented groups, particularly the priority groups identified in the county Physical Activity Framework.
- Develop a highly motivated competent professional workforce that can help to drive participation levels.
- Change the culture and perception of the workforce working within the sport sector.
- Develop a countywide approach to developing the workforce providing clear evidence and impact driven outcomes.

With the above in mind, the plan outlines three strategic priorities, which aim to place the needs and motivations of the least active at the heart of all practice. This will involve re-engineering the existing workforce to provide them with a greater awareness and understanding of the least active population, as well developing a ‘person like me’ approach in building a new broader and diverse workforce which is more representative of our least active communities.

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SUMMARY OF PLAN

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE MORE ACTIVE, MORE OFTEN
12,00 fewer inactive people by 2021
Reducing adult inactivity at a faster rate
Reducing inequalities by people in lower socio-economic groups and those with a limiting illness or disability
More children & young people moving & forming healthy active lifestyles

TOP CLASS WORKFORCE
A customer focused workforce that better understands the participant
A broader and more diverse workforce that better reflects the least active communities we need to engage
A better valued and supported workforce

OUTCOME 1: A customer focussed workforce providing meaningful experiences for every participant
OUTCOME 2: A broader and diverse workforce with the right behaviours and values to engage the inactive participant
OUTCOME 3: A skilled and supported workforce that feels valued and empowered to foster a culture of self-directed learning.

BUILDING A WORKFORCE FOR A MORE ACTIVE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
**NATIONAL CONTEXT**

**Sporting Future: Cross Government Strategy 2015**
Outlines the wider contribution that the sport and leisure sector have on health, social cohesion, economic development and individual self-efficacy. It also acknowledges that a great deal of work needs to be undertaken to change the way many employees, organisations and volunteers interact with customers. This includes the need to develop a more culturally reflective, motivated and skilled coaching workforce to tackle inactivity.

**Towards an Active Nation: Sport England 2016**
Outlines how the Government’s Strategy will be delivered and adopts a more ‘business to consumer’ approach with a focus on customer needs underpinned by a greater understanding of behavioural science and the behaviour change models. There is an emphasis on the sector to adapt to new trends in order to get more people taking part, sustain participation, and develop talent.

**Coaching in an Active Nation**
**Sport England 2016**
Aims to unleash the power of coaching for all those people taking their first steps to becoming more physically active. The plan outlines five strategic approaches, associated tactics and success factors needed to revolutionise the culture, accessibility and perception of coaching. The Plan is a ‘Call to Action’ to modernize how we think and talk about coaching.

**Volunteering in an Active Nation: Sport England 2016**
Accompanied by several new funding opportunities, this strategy puts the experience of the volunteer and a drive to increase diversity at the heart of efforts to support volunteers.

**Working in an Active Nation: Sport England 2018**
The strategy aims to complement ‘Coaching in an Active Nation’ and ‘Volunteering in an Active Nation’ and together they highlight the importance of people development to help improve and enhance the customer experience as a key way in which we can get more people active, especially in-actives and under-represented groups. The vision of the strategy is: A skilled, motivated and valued workforce to inspire an active nation. This is underpinned by two clear objectives; support the workforce to become more customer focussed, and develop the workforce so that it’s recognised as professional.
“Building a Workforce for a More Active Northamptonshire”
WORKFORCE AMBITION & PRIORITIES

“Building a Workforce for a More Active Northamptonshire”

This ambition will be achieved by focussing resources on three main strategic priorities:

**PRIORITY ONE**
A skilled and customer focussed workforce that better understands the participant.

**PRIORITY TWO**
A diverse and broader workforce that reflects and is able to influence the least active communities.

**PRIORITY THREE**
A better valued and supported workforce.

The ambition and priorities are underpinned by the six guiding principles below. These guiding principles have provided the foundations and the thought process in the formulation of this plan and the approach being taken to build, develop and transform the workforce.

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**What do we mean by Workforce?**

For the purpose of this plan ‘Workforce’ is a collective term which refers to anyone who has the opportunity or ability to enable a participant (directly or indirectly) to engage in any type of sport or physical activity. This includes volunteers, coaches, the professional workforce and people in clubs.

**Professional Workforce:** This includes paid employees working in the sport and physical activity sector (e.g. those working in sports development, health and wellbeing, fitness clubs and leisure centres). There are other professions outside the sector who also play a pivotal role in influencing, signposting and nudging physical activity behaviour (e.g. social workers, health advisors, housing officers, teachers, general practitioners). This plan also has aspirations to include that wider workforce.

**Coaches:** A new and broader definition of coaching has been created by Sport England in line with their strategic commitments to support a broader range of participants in sport and physical activity. The term ‘coach’ or ‘coaches’ is used throughout the plan to describe the broader definition of the coach and other frontline practitioners. This could include the traditional sports coach or an activator, facilitator, instructor, leader or trainer.

**Volunteers:** This term refers to those in none paid positions that help make sport happen (e.g. event marshals, officials and people in clubs).
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

CUSTOMER CENTERED
Ensuring that partners understand and deliver across the customer journey rather than a previous focus on just the activity. We believe it’s essential for our workforce to understand the values, motivations and barriers to their perspective customers and shape their delivery and workforce accordingly.

PERSON LIKE ME
Building on the foundation that ‘the person’ comes before the sport or physical activity. Enlisting the help of local organisations and partners working in their communities to work with the people in their environment, to capacity build, recruit and mobilise a local workforce. This approach provides a person-centred learning journey that is creative, relevant and adaptable to that person’s own environment which is communicated in an appropriate and appealing way that resonates with the demographic of the people involved.

COLLABORATION
The success of the plan and realising its ambition will be based on a number of collaborative partnerships with a range of stakeholders. These partnerships will be built on unity of vision, creating a strong sense of purpose to fulfil the ambition in this plan. We will focus on development of senior management and lead officers initially then build capacity inside their organisations.

CROSS SECTOR ENGAGEMENT
Scaling up the level of engagement and partnerships across different sectors. Widening engagement will require overcoming traditional mind-sets, encouraging partners to take risks, connect with other organisations with different drivers, resources, timescales, values and cultures and agreeing common joint objectives. Cross sector engagement will help us to make every contact count in our reach and influence a wider audience.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
A large element of our learning programmes will be based on experiential learning. We believe it’s vital that our workforce learn and reflect from their own experiences and then embed this learning into practice. Through the support of mentors and peers we will develop their learning and increase their understanding of the customer and their ability to engage in physical activity.

CAPACITY BUILDING
We believe that the CSPs role is to capacity build our partners using a combination of knowledge, skills, relationships, interactions, and organisational resources that will help local communities transform neighbourhoods into places of opportunity. By helping local organisations and their leaders develop their competencies and skills of their local community this in turn will help to provide a more effective and sustainable workforce which better understands the individuals they are looking to engage.


What do we know?
Understanding our potential customers and particularly the least active is not easy. How, when and why the customer engages in physical activity can be very complex. Similarly the journey they take to becoming active can be even more complicated.

We know the least active do not prioritise physical activity. We therefore need a workforce that can engage with the least active, understand them, motivate them and signpost them to activity. Sometimes this workforce may not even be a physical activity/sport related workforce, but instead a health professional or housing officer for example. We need to make the journey to that first opportunity is as easy as possible and even support them along the way. Therefore ensuring that the first opportunity, is in the right place, at the right time and ensuring we have the right workforce creating a good meaningful experience will be key as this will make or break that individual’s attempt to keep engaged.

We believe that existing provision in Northants does not meet the needs of the in-actives. We therefore need to think and work differently and recognise that the workforce required to engage the in-actives is wider than just the traditional type of delivery or deliverer. Some of our current workforce are willing to work with the in-actives, but there is a disparity in awareness, knowledge and understanding of our least active populations.

What do we need to do?
If we are to get more people active from our least active communities, the workforce leading the sector needs to develop a better understanding of the customer – their needs, barriers and motivations. Customer-centricity should be a passion that runs through each organisation and drives every decision. Lead organisations must role model this commitment and ensure every decision is based on offering and delivering a great meaningful experience.

Developing a whole systems approach to training and development for partner organisations, facilities, coaches and those working in communities will help to develop systemic change across the whole workforce, from those in leadership and managerial roles to those working in more customer facing roles and frontline staff.

Working with new partners and across different sectors will help to reach out to new audiences. This will also help us to continually gather behavioural insight and deepen our understanding of the customer – particularly the least active. Increasing the understanding of behaviour change, emotional intelligence, creative engagement, diversity and disability awareness and inclusive practice are some of the areas that have been highlighted as areas which require training and support.

How will we do it?

Key Actions:
- Utilising external expertise develop The Inspiring Workforce Programme to create an innovative learning journey for key partners and organisations and their workforce, including facilities, coaches and those working in communities. In doing so, support the workforce to embed their learning into practice and share their learning across the network.
- Develop The Inspiring Bursary Scheme providing financial support to gain leadership or coaching qualifications for coaches willing to enhance their learning through the Inspiring Workforce approach.

Success Measures:
- Pre and post evidence of partners, coaches and those working in communities engaged in the Inspiring Workforce Programme and the learning outcomes and experiences embedded into practice.
- Impact of programme in creating a more customer awareness and focussed workforce measured by the increased reach to the least active and the quality of the participant experience.

Outcome 1: A customer focussed workforce providing meaningful experiences for every participant.
“We need a sector that welcomes everyone - meets their needs, treats them as individuals and values them as customers”

The Inspiring Workforce Programme will provide the workforce (paid and voluntary) with the knowledge, skills and competencies to understand the barriers, motivations and values of the least active populations. Using practical examples and behavioural insight the programme of learning will also uncover the customer journey to physical activity and the customer experience.

The customer centric approach and philosophy behind the programme will ensure behaviour change principles and practices are embedded into all types of workforce. From management and leadership, to development officers and frontline staff and deliverers. There will be a level of commitment expected by partner organisations and individuals invited to attend the programme.

Part of this commitment, will be to ensure their learning is put into practice. i.e. adapting their existing practices or create new and innovative practices to ensure that person-centred philosophy and a customer focussed approach are fully utilised within their own organisation, setting or environment. Training and development will be offered in all forms; face to face courses, online learning, mentoring via all expert practitioners.

• The Partner Programme Key partners and stakeholders will be invited to take part in the programme initially with the aim of cascading their learning in to practice by encouraging transformational change across their organisation. It will include training on behaviour change, emotional intelligence, customer journey, creativity and planning interventions. They will be shown how to support the workforce and embed new innovative ways of working. This will present a great opportunity for the professional workforce within key organisations.

• The Coaches Programme To include a similar menu of courses listed above but tailored to the coaching workforce. The key emphasis will be to provide coaches with the opportunity to learn to develop a person-centred coaching philosophy by gaining a deeper insight into why great people skills are an intrinsic part of being an effective coach.

• The Community Programme This programme will be tailored to the workforce working in communities (e.g. community centre staff, housing managers, charities). It will involve some practical delivery around planning of workforce interventions and coach developer support and tools.

• The Club Programme This will provide clubs with a series of workshops to help them effectively communicate their club offer to a wider audience, particularly the least active. Programmes such as Satellite Clubs, as well as workshops and resources from Club Matters will be utilised.

All clubs, coaches and communities signed up to the Inspiring Workforce Programme will have access to the Workforce Bursary Scheme. The scheme criteria will be weighted towards meeting the Workforce Plan priorities, outcomes and guided principles.
CASE STUDY 1
LEARN 2 BE ACTIVE PROJECT

Engaging people with mental health conditions in sport and physical activity.

A pilot project developed by the CSP in partnership with Corby Borough Council and Northamptonshire Learn2b Service to recruit and educate people with mental health conditions on a programme of sport and physical activity which would lead onto volunteering and coaching opportunities.

The project provided some valuable learning when working with this cohort population:

- Working with a recognised mental health provider had many benefits; their brand was recognised and trusted by the target audience and they had an effective method of recruitment; the tutors were compassionate, knowledgeable, understanding with the right skills to support the candidates, particularly if they have a ‘wobble’ as they were able to offer a solution and keep them motivated in a sympathetic but assertive way.

- Taking time to establish the group first and then gradually introducing them to a range of activities had a positive response and led to prolonged engagement from the participants as peer support became a key motivator and helped with retention and enjoyment.

- Awareness of terminology; ‘sporty’ and ‘coaching’ language can discourage the less active from getting involved.

- People with mental health conditions are more likely to consider volunteering or coaching roles once they have increased their self-efficacy and built up their own self confidence in an active, safe, friendly and welcoming environment.

CASE STUDY 2
TRILOGY 50+ ACTIVITY BUDDIES

Peer Support Volunteers.

Many older people experience a decline in their level of engagement with sport and physical activity in post-retirement years which can lead to a decline in self-esteem, confidence and belief in their own abilities and skills.

The Activity Buddies project aims to promote older people to challenge these concerns alongside the staff from the Trilogy Team. The Activity Buddies programme supports members of this peer group to overcome some of the barriers to being physically active alongside campaigning for health living and successful ageing.

Activity Buddies provides a friendly and welcoming face at a variety of activities including 50 Plus Days, health walks and classes, helping to provide information and answering questions.

In December 2017, five volunteers attended the first Volunteer Buddies Training course, looking at how they could support their peer group to become and stay physically active. In January 2018 these Activity Buddies went on to support their first sessions.

The Activity Buddies have proved to be an instant hit with new and current members alike; new participants particularly have appreciated the additional welcome and support from the Activity Buddies.

‘The Activity Buddy role has had a significant impact on my personal life, improving my morale and self-confidence alongside improving my overall wellbeing and given me a new lease of life’.
**What do we know?**

Northamptonshire’s coaching workforce lacks diversity and is not reflective of the least active communities we need to engage. There are fewer women (43%), a smaller proportion of people from Black and Ethnic Minority communities (6%) and fewer with a limiting disability (6%) and from lower socio-economics groups (8%). The workforce is generally older (64% aged 45 years plus) with only 10% from the 18 - 24 years age group. The majority (81%) are volunteers and only 17% of coaching takes place in community settings.

Similarly, the volunteer workforce which is slightly lower than England average (14.1%) lacks diversity and equality; with more males volunteering (17.1%) compared to females (11%); those without a disability (16%) compared to those with (7.8%) and very few if any come from lower socio-economic groups (no significant data). This means that women, disabled people and people from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to be aware of and experience the benefits of being a volunteer in sport, despite having the most to gain from the volunteering experience.

Diversifying the coaching workforce has been identified as an important factor to ensure that people from all communities can participate in sport and physical activity. To ensure they are coached by people who are empathetic to their needs and reflective of their social environment.

This is an approach that has often been referred to as ‘person like me’. It is also important that organisations reflect the communities that they serve as they need to be able to communicate effectively with customers and understand their needs, no matter the customer’s language or culture. Having a workforce who have the background knowledge, skills and experience to do this and understand the communities we serve is essential. Whilst a culturally diverse and inclusive workforce has many benefits, recruiting individuals from diverse communities and under-represented groups can

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1. Northamptonshire Coaching Workforce Survey 2017
2. Active Lives 2017

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**What do we need to do?**

Whilst it’s important to develop, retain and support our current traditional coaching workforce, we also need to create a new broadened workforce of frontline deliverers. A workforce that better reflects our inactive communities, with the right knowledge, behaviours and values to engage and support the least active. Some of our current workforce may be willing to work in these communities, but they need training and support to develop their skills to do this.

Mobilising a local workforce can contribute at many levels - personal, social and economic – helping to be the catalyst for transformation of any neighbourhood. Solving the imbalance and diversity challenge will help to grow the understanding at a grassroots level about the benefits of coaching and volunteering in sport. Empowering communities in capacity building, co-design and delivery of the activity will help to create a vehicle for social change and help to provide sustainable activities in the long term. Our priority, therefore, should be to get more people from these communities excited about volunteering, leading or coaching for their own individual and personal development, and the positive impact it will have on that community.

We need to think more creatively about our recruitment strategies to attract more people from the least active communities. The misconception that you have to be ‘fit and sporty’ to volunteer in sport needs to change, and the health and wellbeing and the social and employability benefits need to be widely communicated. Making training opportunities more accessible to these communities will also help to raise aspirations, competencies and employability skills that will help move those individuals closer to the job market.

Similarly we need to consider how we might influence and engage a broader workforce particularly frontline practitioners from other non-sporting organisations such as those working in health, housing and adult social care. This will help us extend our reach to a wider audience particularly the least active.
The combined reach of the workforce working across the public, voluntary and private sector network in Northamptonshire is huge, connecting with every resident of county at some level. The more organisations and networks that we can influence increases our chances of reaching those least active communities.

We, therefore need to make sure that we try and influence and make connections with these organisations and groups, ensuring the importance of being physical active is promoted and advocated across the wider workforce, and in doing so, equip the wider workforce and networks with the skills, knowledge and understanding to steer their customers towards more active lifestyles.

How will we do it?

Key Actions:

• A commitment by partners and senior leaders to ensure governance structures and recruitment policy and procedures encourage diversity in the workforce.
• Ensure the Bursary Scheme supports the broadened definition of coaching, with the aim of making it easier for under-represented and more diverse communities to start coaching.
• Develop partnerships and interventions with a range of organisations and charities that provide expertise in the field of diversity i.e. Street Games, Activity Alliance, Mind.
• Develop a countywide Inclusive Ambassador Programme with the aim of recruiting, developing and supporting disabled sports participants to become volunteer advocates and promoters of inclusive sport.
• Using an asset based development approach, capacity build in the identified ‘Hot Spot’ priority areas where there are the least active diverse communities and share the learning from this approach across the network.
• Create a Workforce Diversity Fund to offer financial support to organisations that are developing workforce plans which aim to recruit diverse and under-represented groups
• Develop an Inspiring Professionals Programme to engage and upskill professions outside the sector advocate and promote physically activity.
• Gain support from Public Health, Nene and Corby Commissioning Groups and Practice Managers to develop the ‘Moving Healthcare Professionals’ programme across Northamptonshire.
• Work in partnership with housing associations, charities and trusts to increase awareness and upskill the workforce in the delivery of physical activity.
• Ensure the workforce recruited and employed to implement Social Prescribing across the county are provided with the necessary training and resource to confidently prescribe physical activity.
• Develop an Apprenticeship Scheme in Northamptonshire offering more young people with the opportunity to enter the sport and leisure sector.

Success Measures:

• Pre and post evidence of the type of workforce being recruited, upskilled and deployed in target ‘Hot Spot’ priority areas
• Measurable Impact of the Diversity Fund and Bursary Scheme on the diversity of the workforce.
• Measurable Impact of the Inclusive Ambassadors Programme
• The level of engagement by professions outside the sector that are influencing and advocating physically active lifestyles.

Outcome 2: A broader and diverse workforce with the right behaviours and values to engage the inactive participant.

“Disability is not necessarily a barrier as long as the activity is delivered in a way that suits our needs. The reason I booked on this course is because I knew the course organiser would have an understanding and empathy for my mental health needs”

Participant from the Learn2b Active Project
• The Inspiring Professionals Practice
A programme to increase knowledge, understanding and recognition across the broadened workforce of the benefits of being physically active to meet other benefits and outcomes – social, mental, individual, economic, community etc...

• The Inclusive Ambassadors Programme
A programme which aims to recruit volunteer disabled people to help inspire more disabled people to get active, signpost to disability and inclusive sport across the county and help break down some of the barriers which prevent disabled people taking part in sport and physical activity.

• A Diversity Fund
A new Fund for organisations that are seeking to support individuals from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups into the workforce. This could include supporting plans to increase diversity across each type of workforce – volunteer, coaching workforce and professional workforce.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
Recruiting a workforce from Lower-Socio-Economic Areas

• Word of mouth is the most effective means of promotion, therefore explore ways of promoting awareness between local residents. Identify the local leaders / community connectors in the area, target local workplaces and schools (for parents), resident associations and other community groups.

• Consider early financial incentives to draw interest and look to emphasise the monetary ‘value’ of training, kit and other opportunities.

• Target local people who already involved in or interested in sport and physical activity.

• Emphasise the flexibility of the programme in terms of location and times and the personal activity benefits to potential activators.

• Discuss long-term career plans and objectives with those who express an early interest – including ways to secure paid opportunities in a related field.

• Emphasise employability skills in all marketing as this is a key good motivator for women and those from local social groups.

“I think it’s important that the coaches are from similar backgrounds to us or have similar physical activity experiences. They should also be friendly and approachable and be willing to vary and adapt their sessions to suit our goals”

Participant from the Active Billing Community Project
### CASE STUDY 3
### THE ACTIVE BILLING COMMUNITY PROJECT

#### Sophie's Story

Sophie, a young mother of an 8 year old and a guardian for her 15 year old sister, became involved with Bellinge Community House 2 years ago. When the opportunity to take part in the Active Billing Community Project arose, Sophie was really keen to be able to offer something back to her community, despite not being particularly active herself.

Sophie had to travel more than 40 minutes on public transport every day to take her daughter to school and so offering her time whilst her daughter was at school fitted perfectly with her schedule. Whilst she had not led any activities before, she was a member of the PTA at her daughter's school and was keen to make a difference. Sophie was recruited initially as a Health Walk Leader to support the growing numbers in the group. She undertook the Health Walk Leader training and after leading two walks of her own under supervision was qualified to lead.

Sophie began supporting the sessions every week, even during school holidays when there was no additional need to travel the distance to the Community House. When asked why she volunteered, she commented:

> “I really like the people that I meet doing this role and it makes me feel really good giving back to the community”

Sophie was also responsible for making the refreshments for all the walkers at the Community House and spent time talking to the walkers making them feel welcome, many of who were retired and often lived alone. Sophie became integral to providing these people with a friendly face and conversation that for some was lacking in their everyday life.

Sophie was a dedicated volunteer who continued to give her time beyond the initial scope of the project. She enjoyed the additional physical activity she got from walking and was encouraged to walk more with her daughter at other times during the week also.

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### CASE STUDY 4
### THE ACTIVE BILLING COMMUNITY PROJECT

#### Recruiting local activators from lower socio-economic communities

Launched in 2016, the Active Billing Community Project was a place-based approach to engaging the parish of Billing, and in particular the ward of Bellinge (identified in the top 5% of Indices of Deprivation) in physical activity.

Led by the CSP in partnership with Bellinge Community House, the project trialled two main methods of recruiting local activators and community champions to encourage others to get active:

1. Open advert within the community
2. Peer Empowerment Model, identifying participants from within an existing group.

The Peer Empowerment Model, which is successfully deployed in the Jog Northants programme, involved a slightly longer process. Success of the model relies on the creation of a cohesive group to build the confidence, skills and self-efficacy of the participants in the first instance. Once the group is established and participants have built up knowledge and confidence, leaders are recruited and up-skilled from within the group to support the activity. Using this approach, local leaders were recruited for various group activities, including Jogging, Health Walks, Seated Exercise and Aerobics.

The activators came from a mixture of backgrounds with a variety of motivations. For some it was an opportunity to give back to the community, for others activity had been part of their amazing weight loss journey and some just wanted to help people in whatever way they could.

The activators were supported with leader and activator qualifications, (made possible through bursaries), peer to peer support and mentoring as well as additional supporting qualifications (i.e. first aid) and mentoring.
PRIORITY THREE

‘A better valued and supported workforce’

What do we know?
Volunteers in sport give their time because they enjoy it (35%) and to give something back to their community (25%) and we know they have a wide ranging impact.

In 2013, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations calculated the benefits of volunteering to be in excess of £23bn to the UK economy annually, and would require the equivalent of around 1.3 million full-time workers to replace. Volunteers don’t give their time to save on employment costs or provide saving to the public purse. Volunteers invest their time, skills and energy both for their own benefit, bringing purpose to their lives - particularly for older people and the unemployed, and for the wider community. The Impact Inclusive Volunteering Project and The Active Billing Community Project demonstrated that disabled people and people from lower socio-economic areas do want to volunteer, but they lack the confidence and require the support to do so.

While many people join the volunteer workforce every year; there are others who decide to stop. Approximately 32% of sports volunteers stop or reduce involvement each year compared to 17% of general volunteers. The main reasons for stopping volunteering are lack of time and changes in circumstances. Other reasons include not having the right skills, lacking confidence, and feeling that others should do more. Negative experiences within the organisation or sports club, bureaucracy, and a lack of recognition can also lead to drop out as well as old age and health issues.

For our professional workforce, the current financial climate in Northamptonshire and the proposed local government reorganisation has created a climate of uncertainty amongst the whole local authority sector, including those working in sports development and leisure related roles and facilities. The imminent restructures and implications those bring will have a massive impact on staff morale, motivation and retention.

What do we need to do?
We need to invest time and resources to better support our volunteer workforce and recognise the wider impact they have, and the contribution they make to society. We believe that through our programme delivery and with the establishment of mentoring, peer to peer support, tools and resources our workforce to feel better supported and in turn deliver a better experience to the customer.

Most of the attention in any volunteering project is focused on the stakeholders and their needs. We also need to provide recognition of the volunteer’s needs, contributions and achievements. Simply thanking volunteers every time that they contribute makes a difference. Preferably this should be in person and if possible the ‘thank you’ should come from the beneficiaries, which have the double benefit of recognising the volunteer’s work as well as allowing volunteers to see the benefit of their work. Secondly the timing of the ‘thank you’; placing the ‘thank you’ at the end of the project will improve the memory of the volunteering experience (peak-end effect) which should lead to better retention of volunteers.

Similarly with our professional workforce, we need to continue to support and recognise the excellent work that they do. Investing time and resources into our current workforce, helps to retain a skilled and motivated workforce, but it can also attract talent.

We need to optimise the potential of all the workforce within the sector by engaging all employers, employees, training providers, education institutions to establish a stronger culture of professional development and encourage every individual to continue their self-directed learning and development.

Working in partnership with CIMSPA to drive sector change and support them to become a strong, well respected and sustainable chartered institute.

1 Join In 2013 Volunteer Survey / Sport and Recreation Alliance Club Survey 2013.
How will we do it?

Key Actions:
• Develop a coordinated network of agencies supporting an effective, transparent and supportive volunteer pathway
• Utilise good practice and the learning from existing programmes to develop a countywide Volunteer Reward and Recognition Scheme.
• Ensure a better supported workforce through a programme of training, clubs roadshows and guidance.
• Develop the UoN Community Learning Hub to provide training and development opportunities and ongoing industry support.
• Engage with a range of education and training providers to continually improve the knowledge and skills of the workforce working in the sector
• Empower the workforce to continue their learning and gain ongoing peer support by establishing a network of ‘Communities of Practice’.
• Develop a Learning Resource for insight, e-learning, toolkits and guidance and to increase knowledge, provide sector support and encourage sharing of good practice.

Success Measures:
• Volunteer Reward and Recognition Scheme in place, with measurable outcomes
• The UoN Community Learning Hub successfully operating providing community learning experiences through placements and deployment opportunities for the students and access to high quality learning opportunities at the Waterside Campus
• Monitoring and evaluation from all participants involved in the Inspiring Workforce Programme to gauge feedback pre, during and post programme creating a regular feedback loop.
• The quantitative and qualitative impacts of the ‘Communities of Practice

Outcome 3: A skilled and supported workforce that feels valued and empowered to foster a culture of self-directed learning.

The UoN Community Learning Hub

Inspired by the new University of Northampton (UoN) Waterside Campus which opened September 2018, the Community Learning Hub will be a new collaborative partnership between the CSP and the Sports Faculty at the University.

Teaching and learning at the UoN is provided by a varied staff of industry experts and academics, providing courses, producing research outputs and creating partnerships with businesses and the local community, ensure students graduate with the skills, experience and attitudes that employers are looking for.

The UoN is committed to supporting the community, using staff and student expertise through a growing number of initiatives. This reciprocal partnership will include:
• Academic and research support in measuring the impact of this plan and the Asset Based approach to workforce development
• Student work placements providing practical experience in coaching, sports development and the Asset Based Community Development approach in the priority ‘Hot Spot’s.
• Access to the Waterside research and learning facilities for training and development
• Training and deployment opportunities for the student coaching and volunteer workforce
CASE STUDY 5
NORTHAMPTON LEISURE TRUST - REWARD AND RECOGNITION SCHEME

Rewarding and recognising volunteers
The Volunteer Reward Recognition Scheme is designed to allow volunteers to be recognised for their efforts and hours spent volunteering on various projects and programme run by the Leisure Trust.

Every hour that a volunteer completes is recorded. Some volunteers will volunteer at one off events collecting a few hours each year. Other volunteers collect numerous hours every week throughout the year. For milestone volunteering hours, volunteers are awarded certificates and prizes.

The Volunteer Reward Recognition Scheme attracts volunteers of all ages from young people through to the 50Plus Activity Buddies, with over 60 volunteers a year involved in the scheme. Volunteers support activities such as gymnastics and swimming lesson alongside community outreach projects such as Street Sports, Health Walks and National Play Day.

In 2017/18 volunteers support over 3000 hours of physical activity sessions, with 41 volunteers receiving recognition for their contributions with the Scheme (volunteering a minimum of 25 hours), including 4 volunteers who supported over 100 hours of activities and an additional 2 volunteers giving up over 200 hours of their time.

Volunteers within the Scheme also receive individual support and advice on their personal development, whether this be expanding their voluntary opportunities or support and experience to potentially gain paid employment.

The Street Sports project provides a positive example where a number of young people have gone on to gain paid coaching experiences across a variety of settings.

MEASURING IMPACT
It is important to understand the impact of this plan and whether the workforce created, engineered and developed as a result of this plan has helped to achieve the county’s ambition of reducing inactivity at a faster rate across Northamptonshire over the next two years.

A separate delivery plan and measurement framework will be developed with key indicators to measure and monitor progress. This will include quantifiable measures such as the demographics and diversity of workforce, investment into workforce development and the number of new volunteers and coaches recruited, as well as qualitative measures which measures quality of the experience, shifts in attitudes beliefs and knowledge of the workforce.

We will also need to be accountable for leading the way in terms of innovation and learning – what works and what doesn’t, and sharing this learning and encouraging all partners to do the same.
This is a countywide document which has been aligned specifically to meet the aims and objectives of the Physical Activity and Sport Framework for Northamptonshire. Whilst the implementation of the plan will be led and driven by the CSP, alongside the newly formed County Workforce Group, there is an aspiration that all partners will adopt the priorities and guiding principles within the Workforce Plan and apply them within their own organisational plans.

The roles and responsibilities of these key organisations are outlined below:

**Northamptonshire Sport Core Team**
- Strategic direction for workforce development across Northamptonshire
- Be a key driver in capacity building organisations in the county
- Encourage collaboration by connecting partners, organisations that share common goals to maximise resources, expertise, investment and impact
- Promote the sharing of knowledge, insight and best practice across the Partnership
- Direct or supportive role in the delivery of some of the actions within this plan. A workforce strand will be embedded across all staff work programmes, which includes the School Sports Partnerships and Children and Young People team
- Employment of a workforce strategic and operational / delivery role.
- Incorporating the workforce priorities into the District Delivery Plans.

**Northamptonshire Workforce Group**
- Responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Workforce Plan and the production of an Workforce Action Plan which will identify lead organisations, roles and responsibilities, timescales and the resources required to implement the Workforce Plan.
- Responsible for ensuring the outcomes of the plan and its overall impact in achieving the Frameworks ambition of reducing activity is evaluated.
- The Workforce Group will form part of Northamptonshire Sports governance structure and therefore will report into the county Participation Forum (Forum involving all delivery partners), Partnership Group (CSP key stakeholders) and Executive Board.

**Local Authorities, including sport and leisure departments and facilities**
- Pivotal role in the communication and co-ordination of training and opportunities and networks locally, including overseeing the support and development of local clubs and the recruitment of volunteers, coaches and instructors for the delivery of local activities.
- Oversee the management and operation of local sport and leisure facilities and provision and the training and development of staff.

**Public Health Directorate**
- Develop and support strategic approaches to reach and up-skill the broader workforces (e.g. Healthcare Professionals)
Public Health Directorate (continued)
• Provision of training to the wider workforce and implementation of the MECC programme
• Commission and manage specific public health services and ensuring the workforce delivering those interventions are appropriately skilled
• Promoters and advocates of physical activity and the benefits of being active to a wide range of service providers including working in the primary care and health prevention services.

University of Northampton
• Development of the UoN Community Learning Hub
• Academic and research support in measuring the impact of this plan

Local Charities and Community Groups
• Help to reach and influence the least active and diverse communities
• Provide support in capacity building in the communities and support in accessing external funding opportunities

Schools and Further Education*
• Provision of curricular and extra-curricular sport and the deployment of coaches and deliverers
• Coordinate and deliver workforce related programmes including: leadership and volunteering, Satellite Clubs, School Games programme etc..

* Please note: There is already a very comprehensive PE and School Sport Teacher CPD and Workforce Programme in place which is led by Northamptonshire Sport through the four School Sport Partnerships
One of 43 Active Partnerships across England, Northamptonshire Sport is a partnership of local and national organisations working together to get people in Northamptonshire More Active, More Often. The Northamptonshire Core Team is hosted by Northamptonshire County Council and its activities are funded through Sport England Lottery grant and by local and national partners. Northamptonshire Sport is committed to ensuring that sport, physical activity and recreation across Northamptonshire is both safe and inclusive.