



ABOUT FIT IN THE COMMUNITY

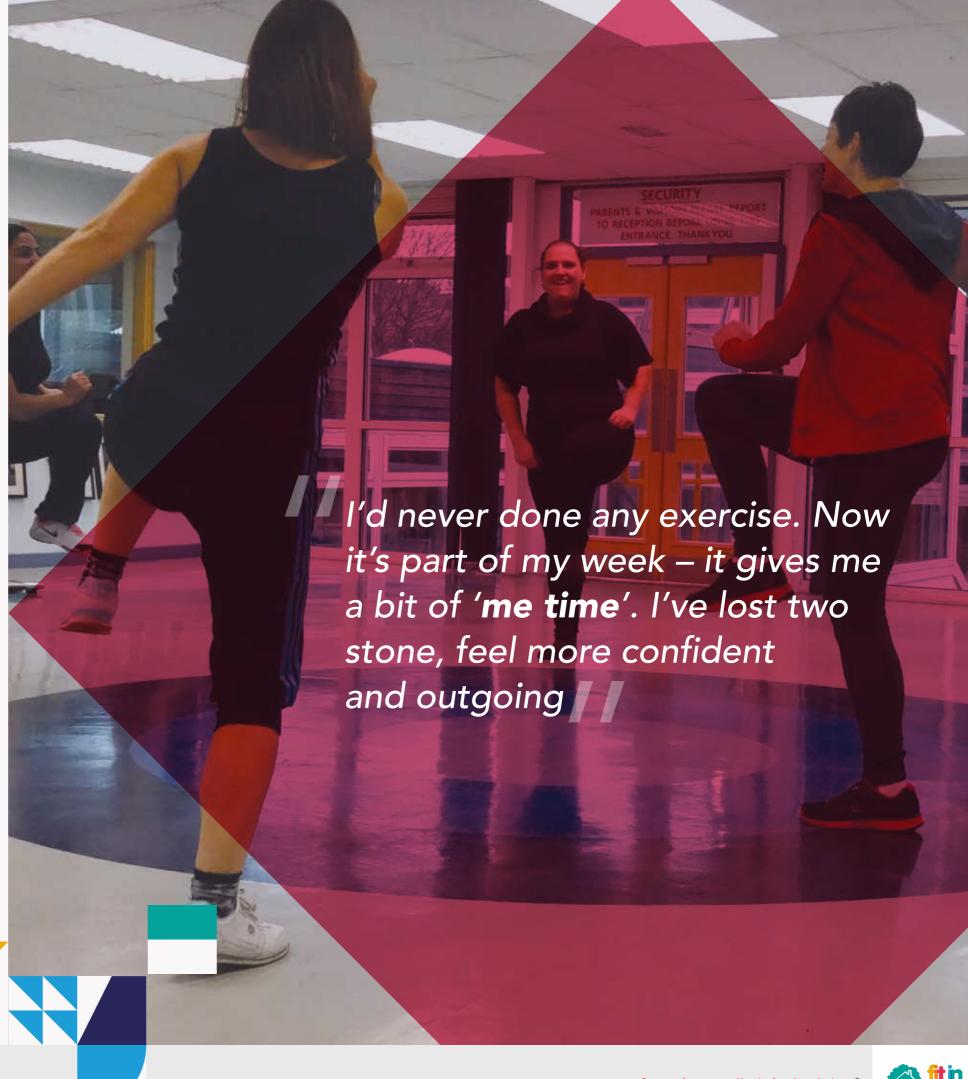
Fit in the Community (FITC) is a three-year project to help inactive residents in Nottingham to get active. It aims to develop and test an innovative model, in which the project is led by a social housing provider, Nottingham City Homes (NCH), rather than traditional sports organisations.

The central focus is on reaching out to NCH's own tenants to support them to become active. NCH manages 26,000 properties, and the project's objective was to engage 10% of the 55,000 social housing residents. The project forges a new partnership between NCH, Nottingham City Council Sport and Leisure (NCC), and support and funding from Sport England.

FITC has delivered a range of free or low-cost activity sessions, at the heart

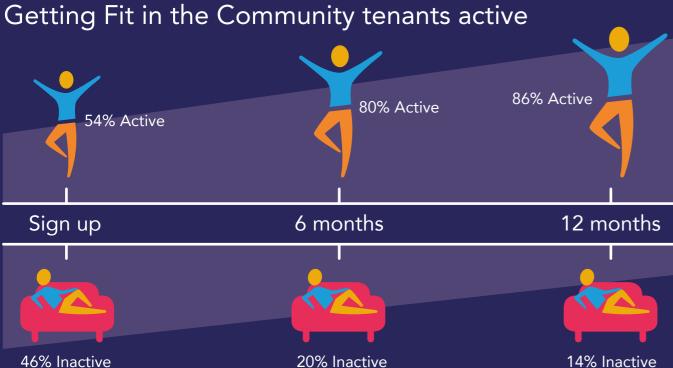
of NCH's communities – making use of existing spaces and hubs within the community, NCH's own communal spaces, and drawing more people into NCC's leisure centres.

A core principle of FITC is to test and learn from this innovative approach, and to share learning with both the housing and sport sectors to support development in this area in the future. This is the purpose of this summary report.





HEADLINE RESULTS



Fitness and sports for adults and families

- **1,034** people came to **community fitness classes** over three years, such as Zumba and Boxercise. The sessions are run at local community venues, with an emphasis on making exercise fun and appealing.
- **1,578** people signed up to **Swim for £1** or **Fit for £1** offers over 18 months, giving them access to NCC pools, gyms and classes for £1 per session.
- **999** people were reached through **sports sessions** over three years, in partnership with local sports activators who deliver sessions such as netball and tennis.

Engagement with young people

1,156 young people were engaged through local **Doorstep Clubs** over three years, providing evening social and activity-based sessions, targeted at hard-to-reach local young people.

Activities for older people

417 older people came to the **Golden Games** over ten months, a programme of weekly activities held across NCH's Independent Living communities. The sessions introduce indoor activities such as skittles and 'carpet curling' and the equipment remains in the communal areas for residents to use in their own time. The Golden Games culminates in an interscheme competition event.

FITC has engaged **5,184** people

FRAMEWORK FOR THE EVALUATION AND LEARNING:

Exploring the project's processes, outcomes and impact

The framework for the evaluation and reporting is based on a Theory of Change, which builds a bottom-up view of the project. This is used to explore the success and learning from the processes that were implemented, and the resulting outcomes and impact.









1.FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

Strong and effective leadership and governance was established.

The success factors were a clear overarching vision, purpose and operating principles – devolved responsibility to appropriate levels within the leadership and governance structure, appropriate challenge when required, the freedom for the project team to innovate and an emphasis on learning and improving.

Leadership commitment and appreciation of the agenda is critical.

The leadership and governance structure worked most effectively when leaders: understood the importance of tenant health and wellbeing and the benefits that would accrue for the organisation, recognised the contribution of being active to health and wellbeing, and had the drive, determination and ability to affect change within their own sphere of influence.

Comprehensive and inclusive early stage planning is crucial.

This was an ambitious change management programme that involved behaviour change to be affected across project partner organisations, local community partners, and inactive tenants. Representatives from NCC and NCH recognise that a more comprehensive and inclusive planning process, in the first six months to a year of the project, would have had a positive impact.

Innovation and targets are not necessarily good 'bed-fellows'.

Care must be taken in setting participation targets for market development projects. Setting targets can encourage projects to chase numbers rather than be motivated to work through challenges and allow innovation to succeed.

Project operational staff working together as a team has been the catalyst for successful partnership working and project delivery.

Co-location of the team allowed real-time communication, planning and problem-solving.

2A. SOCIAL HOUSING AS THE ROUTE TO TARGETING INACTIVE PEOPLE

A broad range of NCH assets have been mobilised to empower inactive tenants to be active. There are examples of how NCH staff, from across the organisation, have positively supported the project. The NCH newsletter has been a successful tool for raising the profile of service provision and the Contact Centre has been a useful mechanism for two-way communication with tenants.

Independent Living (IL) communities have emerged as a successful route to market to engage older tenants in physical activity. Although older tenants within IL are a captive audience, the critical success factor for engagement has been the growing support of IL staff, encouraged and enabled by a leadership team that is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of tenants.

The challenges of day-to-day operations create some barriers to the full engagement of all NCH staff that was originally envisioned. NCH and social housing as a whole are facing a changing political and financial environment, which has placed additional demands on staff resources and time.

Much of front-line staff time is focused on complex case management, supporting a relatively small percentage of the tenant population whose lives are most chaotic. These residents are far from contemplating being active.

The project's direct marketing required the development of a distinctive project brand and stand-alone website. Market testing identified the need for a distinctive project brand – linked to, but distinct from NCH's overall corporate identity as a social landlord. A stand-alone website provided a more effective central hub for online promotion, as well as providing additional functionality such as online booking. Over the last year, 5,300 individuals used the FITC website to find out more about the activities on offer. In the five months since the online booking facility was introduced, 217 people registered and 90 used it to book onto a session.

NCH and tenants are on a journey towards health and wellbeing. NCH is a member of Nottingham City's Health and Wellbeing Board and is committed to supporting its goal to improve healthy life expectancy. NCH and tenants are on a journey towards a new understanding of their relationship, focused on health and wellbeing rather than a traditional housing provision perspective. The greater the understanding of the shared commitment to health and wellbeing, the greater the effectiveness of route to market mechanisms.

Working with 'advocates' to build wider commitment. The early identification and engagement of project 'advocates' (e.g. amongst NCH staff) would have benefitted the project. Supporting a small number of influential 'advocates' creates early project successes that can be celebrated and used to motivate late adopters and detractors.

Supports the development of deeper and wider relationships with residents. Some front-line staff have reported operational benefits from their engagement with the project. Residents have become increasingly more likely to share their concerns and challenges before they become a critical issue. This positive shift in the relationship has the potential to significantly reduce the demands on the organisation, contributing positively to sustaining tenancies.

Front-line staff as sources of community insight.

NCH front-line staff proved to be useful providers of intelligence and insight on local conditions to support the project team shape local opportunities to be active. Ongoing communication between the project team and front-line staff is critically important in fostering a positive relationship.

to to





HOPE CENTRE CASE STUDY

Led by two members of NCH's local area-based team (Tenant Community Involvement Manager and the local Housing Patch Manager), a comprehensive and inclusive community consultation exercise led to the creation of Family Zumba classes at The Hope Centre, Broxtowe.

Detailed consideration of key statistics and other intelligence provided the insight that highlighted Aspley Ward as a priority area for the project. An initial local partner consultation event began the process of building a shared understanding, with local partners, of the ambitions for the FITC project and the approach to community engagement that would work best. Importantly for Broxtowe, it was the first time that the NCH Housing Patch Manager became aware of the FITC project.

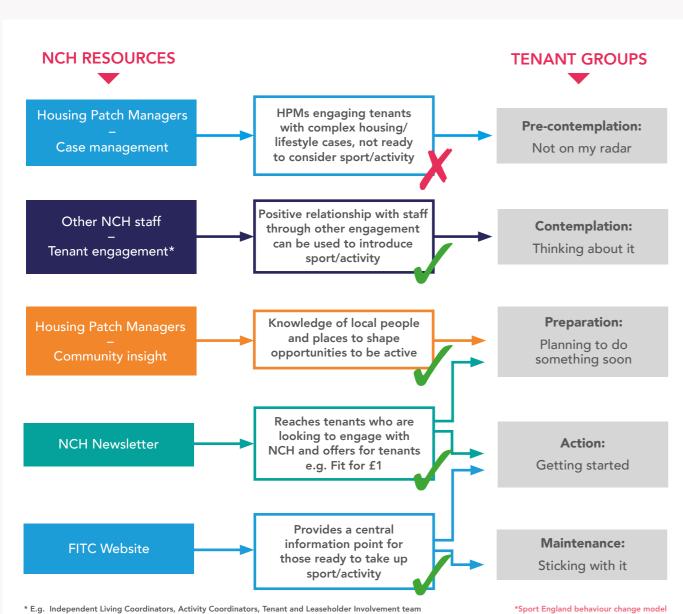
Having worked on the Broxtowe Estate for a number of years, the HPM was well aware of the needs and aspirations of the local community and, in particular, a need to encourage residents to become physically active. Because of this and coupled with her passion for supporting communities to help themselves, well established working relationships with The Hope Centre and Broxtowe Community Club, the HPM made a decision to drive forward with the opportunity and instigated a process of community consultation.

Armed with the insight gained from the community consultation exercise, the local partnership decided that the hosting of family friendly Zumba classes at The Hope Centre would be the best response to identified requirements. Although numbers at the start were low, after a time more and more families began to attend. As with many close-knit communities, word of mouth seems to be the best means by which to generate interest and motivation to attend. Sustaining and developing the Family Zumba class has not been without its challenges.



A multi-agency partnership approach has been developed. The project has been successful in engaging a broad range of community partners to shape and deliver services that are encouraging residents to become active. The project has evolved into a multi-agency partnership that supports route to market. Local youth workers, neighbourhood development officers, health workers, and PCSOs all have positive relationships with resident communities and can be engaged to support a sport and physical activity, health and wellbeing agenda.

Need for insight to match NCH tools and resources with tenants in different stages of behaviour change (see figure below). The best results are achieved when there is deeper insight, resulting in an effective match between (a) the right tools and resources that NCH can bring to the project and, (b) identification of relevant groups with the tenant population, according to their activity/sporting profile e.g. using Sport England's Behaviour Change Model. For example, NCH insight shows that there is wide readership of its Newsletter amongst engaged tenants - this is the best way to reach widely to those tenants in 'planning' or 'action' stages, who may just need information about FITC offers. Tenants in earlier stages of behaviour change will need more personal support to encourage them towards activity, e.g. through relationships with NCH staff - particularly those who have contact with tenants in the 'contemplation' stage.



2B. TRIALLING AN 'INSIDE-OUT' APPROACH – COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP



Using intelligence of local conditions, provided by NCH and community-based partners, has been an integral part of the service development process. Community consultation provided the insight that resulted in the very successful Swim for £1 and Fit for £1 service innovations.

Bespoke community consultation processes. The approach to community consultation needs to be bespoke to the make-up of the community that it wishes to engage. Not all approaches work in every geographical location. For example, communities widely populated by BME demographic responded well to group based consultation rather than individual surveys. This approach, however, was only successful when key community leaders were engaged.

Developing volunteers as Community Champions and Community Activators is challenging. Although there have been a number of success stories in relation to Community Champions and Community Activators, there is a recognition that this element of the project proved to be more challenging and resource intensive than was originally perceived. The creation of a Volunteer Co-ordinator role is recognised as being critical in maximising the value from volunteers.

Community Activators need to be supported to immediately and seamlessly transition from learning into service delivery. This makes sure, as best as possible, that the volunteer's motivation to support the project is successfully translated into practical support.

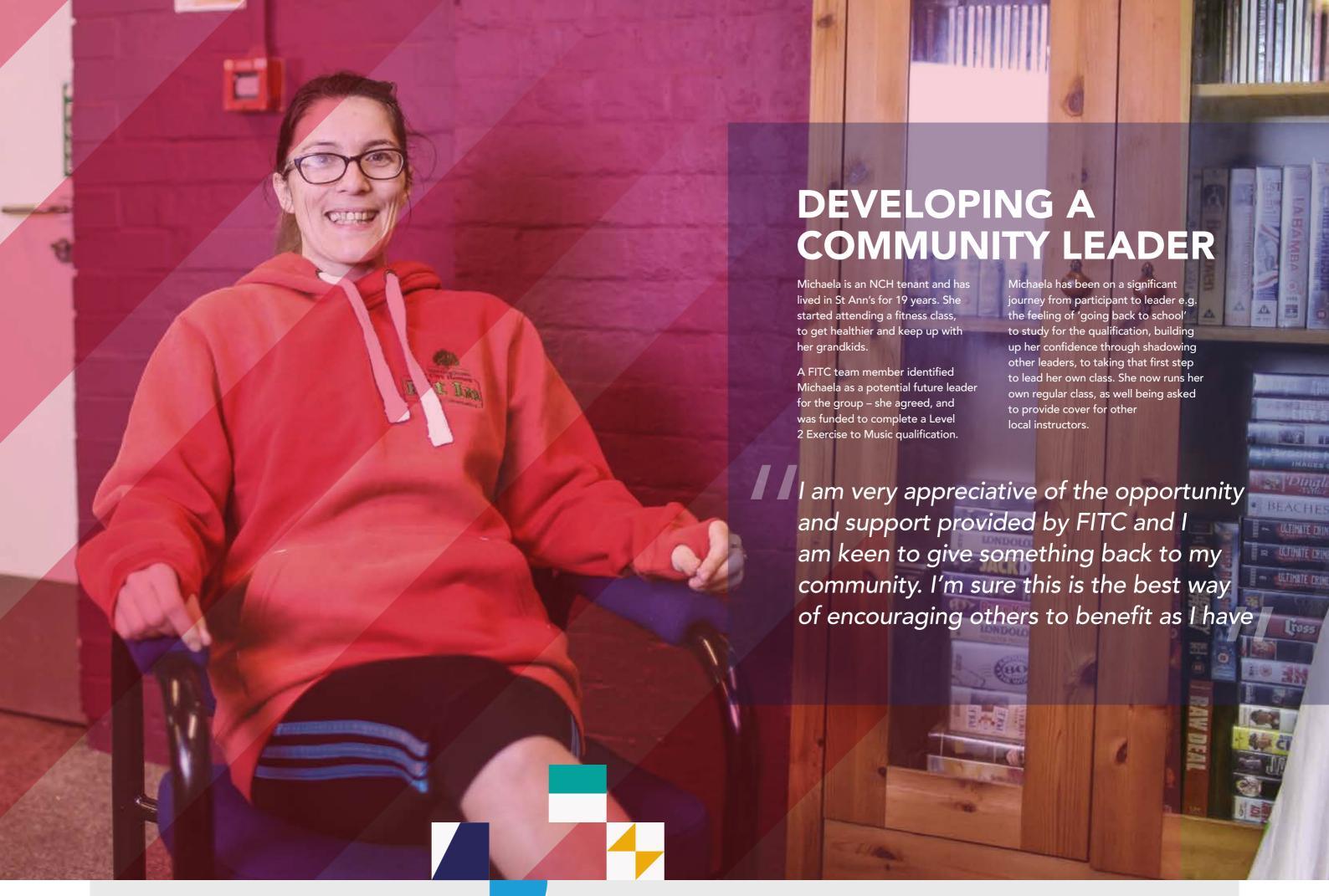
Community Activators. To build local capacity and capability for local fitness activators, the project developed and operated funding and managing a network of paid Community Activators. Managing this team across a large number of community venues is a significant and resource intensive undertaking.

The key skill requirements for Community Activators are personality based rather than technical.

The ability to positively engage with the service participants is key to sustaining their motivation to be active. This includes taking a genuine and keen interest in people, being aware of and sensitive to the challenges in people's lives, as well as a bringing a fun and positive can-do approach to the session, and an ability to make everyone feel included in the activity, whatever their ability.









3. DELIVERING SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TO NCH COMMUNITIES:

An evolving service offer

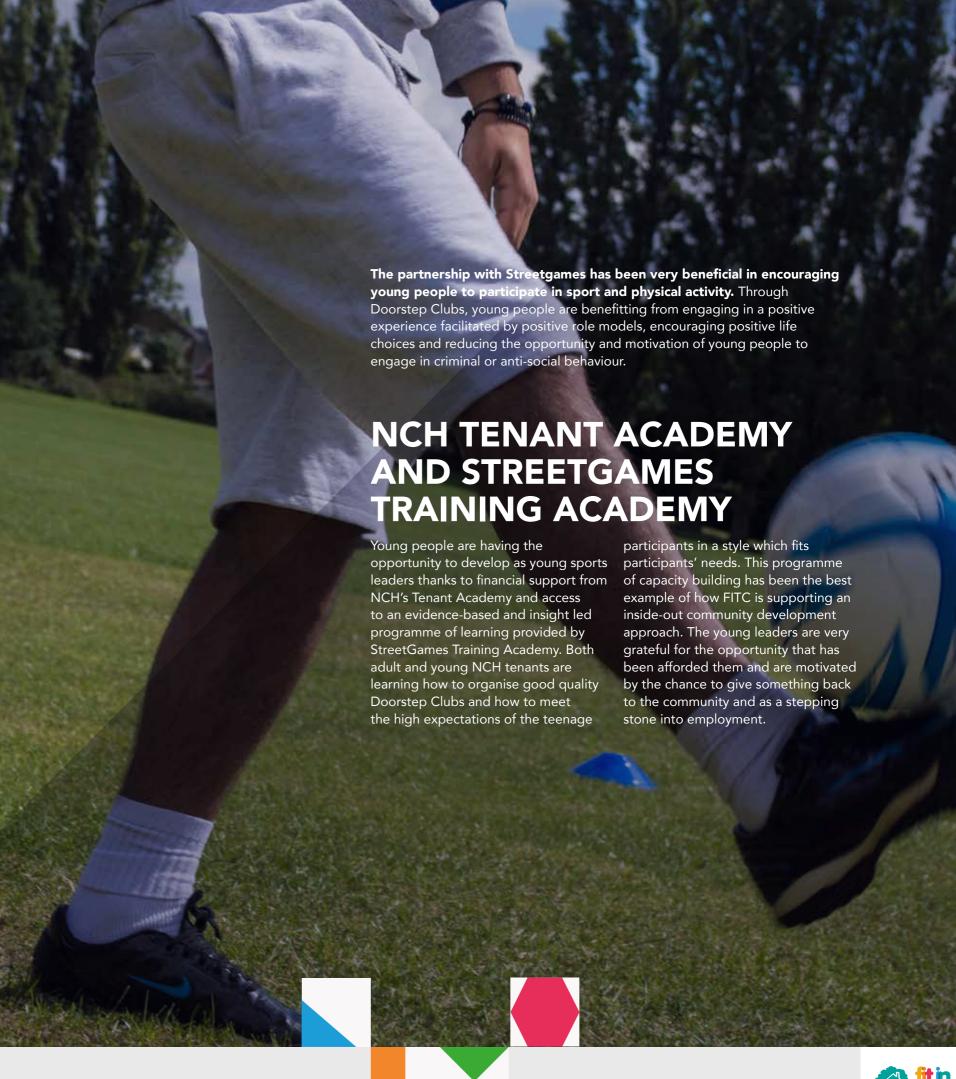


A life course approach to service development and delivery has emerged with different service offers successfully emerging for young people, adults, and older residents.

A number of the preconceived ideas regarding the nature of successful service provision have been challenged, including a perceived lack of desire to access local leisure centres. Tenants have welcomed the opportunity to engage with service provision when it is shaped to allow participation at a time and venue of their own choosing. Financial cost appears to persist as a barrier to participation.

The Fit for £1 and Swim for £1 service offer has been a major success of the project attracting new, inactive people to use NCC leisure facilities.

The challenge moving forward is the extent to which this service offer can be sustained.











THE CHALLENGES OF BEING A PARENT – BENEFITTING FROM FIT FOR £1 OFFER

Becoming a parent places new constraints on people's ability to continue being active. Prior to becoming a parent, Brooke considered herself as being very active. She was an active gym user and practiced martial arts. Since the birth of her daughter, time, a lack of energy, and the cost implications of gym membership have all been significant barriers to maintaining her previous levels of activity, although she very much enjoys the daily walk to and back from school and the occasional bike ride.

The delivery of the NCH newsletter and the offer to use the leisure centre for a £1 was the impetus she needed to begin to focus on her own health and wellbeing. Brooke has now re-established her old habits of regular attendance at the gym and is benefitting from having more energy and has lost that feeling of sluggishness and apathy when she isn't exercising. This provides her with more vigour to deal with the demands and joys of a small child.



STOP DOORSTEP CLUB

Working with a wide range of partners, STOP Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) has been the focal point for regeneration of King Edward's Park in St Ann's. More recently, STOP TRA has linked with FITC and StreetGames to establish the STOP Doorstep Club. STOP Doorstep Club provides a vibrant and varied sporting offer to young people at local venues designed to grow their motivation and ability to adopt a sporting habit for life and make positive life choices.

A key to the success of STOP Doorstep Club is the multi-agency commitment to the project from partners including the Renewal Trust, police, and local schools.

Their support makes sure that young people are growing up with greater ability to take control of their own lives, make positive life choices and give back to their communities. The young people highlight that without this opportunity they would be spending more time on the streets, and potentially getting into trouble, or at home playing on their gaming stations. The enjoyment of the sport and being with friends are the primary benefits that they highlight as being most important. They also comment that they aspire to be like the club leaders.











PROVIDING ADDED VALUE TO THE INDEPENDENT LIVING COMMUNITIES

Older residents are benefitting from Golden Games, a programme of weekly activities held across NCH's Independent Living Communities. Residents very much welcome the opportunity to socialise, have fun, make new friends, and feel a greater sense of belonging.



Palmer Court residents have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities that have been provided for them to become physically active through the Golden Games. Palmer Court, an Independent Living community based in Lenton, is one of NCH's newest housing developments. Built in 2016, it includes 70 one and two bedroom flats and bungalows.

Although only a relatively small percentage of the resident community engaged with FITC, the ones that did have very much enjoyed and benefitted from the experience. Building on the success of the Movement 2 Music classes delivered by a local fitness instructor, FITC provided tenants with the opportunity to take part in the Golden Games programme.

Tenants have benefitted significantly from the experience and highlight the chance to meet and get

to know people and have fun, as the biggest benefit. The participants are quite rightly very proud of the medals and trophies that they won at the Golden Games Celebration Event and are delighted to have made new friends with tenants from other schemes. As a result, tenants from different schemes have started to meet up at each other's homes further enhancing their sense of belonging and wellbeing.

The local fitness instructor is also singled out for praise. The tenants highlight his warmth and charisma as being a big draw to take part. They also highlight that he takes time to sit and chat with them to talk about their health and wellbeing and share his broader knowledge of physical activity and nutrition.

CREATING LINKS WITH COMMUNITY SPORTS

FITC project has supported the creation of a network of NGB Sport Activators and worked with them for mutual benefit. FITC project has provided a very valuable route to market for innovative sport activation products.



Mandy's passion for running comes from her own experience of the benefits. Over the last few years she has gone from being completely inactive, to a regular runner – and as a result has lost 7 stone and seen great improvements to her mental wellbeing.

As an NCH tenant, she first saw a FITC running group advertised on NCH's Facebook page. She wanted to give back to the community as a volunteer, and after

participating in a running group, she took the step to train to become a run leader.

After completing her training through FITC, Mandy was linked into an NGB Activator for England Athletics. Mandy now leads two running groups, supported by the NGB network. Her aim is to reach out to people in her community, using her own experience to engage them with beginners running.







4. HOW DID FITC ACHIEVE ITS OUTCOMES?

Evidence from FITC in relation to Sport England's behaviour change model¹

PRE-CONTEMPLATION

Not on my radar (inactive, not thinking about becoming active)



CONTEMPLATION

Thinking about it (inactive, but thinking about becoming active)



PREPARATION

Planning to do something soon (inactive, but firm plans)



ACTION

Getting started (active at least once a week, but for less than 6 months)



MAINTENANCE

Sticking with it (active at least once a week, for



IMPACT

Changes and benefits from being active



in pre-contemplation

FITC targets those who have already moved out of pre-contemplation

SIGNING UP IS THE FIRST STEP

In some cases, just signing up can help people become more active, even if they don't actually go to a FITC activity



Poor health is the biggest barrier to not being active

FITC HELPS PEOPLE GET MORE ACTIVE

For people who were completely inactive when they signed up to FITC:

3/4 are now active

2/3 say they wouldn't have become active without FITC

Even people who are no longer attending FITC activities are still more active

STICKING WITH FITC KEEPS PEOPLE ACTIVE



Those who stick with FITC for more than 6 months are more likely to be active and achieve higher activity levels

BEING ACTIVE THROUGH FITC RESULTS IN POSITIVE CHANGES



69% of FITC participants experienced one or more

positive changes

1 Sport England 'Towards an Active Nation' model modified to include 'impact'

FITC HAS A NUDGE EFFECT. HELPING PEOPLE ACHIEVE THE NEXT STEP IN THEIR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE JOURNEY

The right kind of support can be better targeted if we know where people are on this journey.

NCH should continue to build its insight, to segment tenant population by sporting behaviour, rather than traditional housing demographics

Poor health is the most common barrier preventing people getting active - but better health is also the biggest benefit for those who take part.

A possible future focus for the FITC is to link into existing community programmes to support entry-level activities for those with disabilities

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START	/	✓					
6 MONTHS	1	1	1	1			

On average, FITC participants exercise on an additional two days per week since they signed up

The majority of FITC sign-ups want to achieve healthy levels of regular exercise - but less than half are actually planning to do so soon.

FITC should draw on learning and initiatives within the wider sporting partnerships around translating aspiration into action

FITC participants find it more challenging to meet the higher activity levels recommended by government (150 mins per week)

The highest levels of activity are achieved by those who have continuity of FITC activities.

The immediate priority for FITC is to implement its sustainability/exit plan, to support activities to continue, or transitioning individuals to similar alternative activities

Measuring social impact requires good quality project data and on-going contact with participants.

To ensure future evidence gathering, FITC should review and consolidate its methods for data collection

1/3 said their health improved 1/3 stated they were fitter 1/5 lost weight 1/4 said they had more fun/enjoyment

ADDED VALUE OF A HOUSING – SPORTS PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

THE SOCIAL HOUSING PERSPECTIVE

What are the benefits and learning for the housing sector from engaging with sports/physical activity?

Enhanced tenant involvement:

• Sport/activity provided a new avenue to draw tenants into engaging with NCH, and raised a positive profile for NCH within the community.

Supporting social housing's community goals:

- FITC has contributed to NCH's corporate aim to transform the quality of life in their neighbourhoods e.g. happier, healthier tenants.
- But some of the longer term aims, e.g. community cohesion and social trust, have not yet been achieved by the project on a wider scale.

Promote role of housing in health promotion/ prevention:

FITC provides evidence of housing's role in supporting tenants to be healthier through physical activity, demonstrating how NCH is contributing to Nottingham City's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, for example:

- Healthy Lifestyles: evidence that FITC contributes to health improvements through being active.
- Positive mental wellbeing: FITC is building success in reducing loneliness and social isolation amongst older people.

Business bottom-line benefits:

- Tenancy sustainment. In best practice examples, FITC facilitates community engagement and early intervention in tenancy issues. But there is limited evidence of this occurring on a wider scale through FITC, mainly because it is difficult to link community interventions with business benefits with existing data – a problem experienced across the housing sector.*
- Cross-organisational links: FITC has facilitated a new relationship between the housing provider and local and national sports sector – creating a network for future joint opportunities.
- * HACT (2016), Community Investment and the Bottom Line

THE SPORTS SECTOR PERSPECTIVE

What are the benefits and learning from sports stakeholders from working with housing?

Meeting local participation targets and strategic goals:

- FITC has been successful in meeting NCC's strategic aims to increase participation in targeted communities i.e. engaging a targeted group of social housing tenants, and reducing inactivity levels.
- Evidence that FITC has contributed to a number of NCC's other social goals e.g. health improvement.
- Testing and evidencing new ways to contribute to national outcomes and policy development (Sport England's 'Active Nation' strategy).
- Working with alternative partners: FITC has shown that working with a social housing provider can be an effective route to inactive groups, while generating considerable learning on the challenges and best-practice approach, as outlined in this report.
- Developing the evidence of the social impact of sport: Using a social impact approach for the evaluation has generated relevant learning as Sport England develops measures of the five health, social and economic outcomes set out in the Government's Sporting Future strategy. It gives a working example of the approach, and shows which social outcomes do and don't show change in the short to medium term.





5. IMPACT OF FIT IN THE COMMUNITY

Our in-depth research with FITC participants – following them over six months to a year – and other project stakeholders, has shown:

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND **MENTAL WELLBEING**

There's evidence of an improvement in health:

Clinical measures of health-related quality of life have increased by 6%



Stopped ___ smoking -



Participants' scores of their own health have **significantly** improved.



People's overall satisfaction with their life has **significantly** improved over a year.



Indicators of mental wellbeing were positive, but stayed the same:

FITC participants had slightly higher mental wellbeing scores than the national average at the start, and this stayed the same over 12 months.

ACTIVE NOTTINGHAM



Membership of clubs where you do sport/ exercise has increased by **12%** over a year



More people use NCC leisure facilities



Volunteering amongst participants has **increased** by

over

6 months

12 months

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC WELLBEING

FITC has invested in developing a fit-forpurpose local fitness delivery workforce, by:

Providing training for 83 people, from basic health and safety to Level 3 fitness qualifications.



Helping kick-start a local network of entry-level fitness instructors, by funding individuals to deliver 1,116 sessions.



But there's no evidence amongst FITC participants of short-medium term change in individual development/economic wellbeing as a result of becoming active through FITC (no change in levels of training/learning, employment or financial comfort).

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



FITC recruited and supported

39 community volunteers.



FITC can help bring people together (see case studies), but currently not influencing change in social connections across all participants.

Indicators of social wellbeing amongst FITC participants showed no change or a decrease over time:

Are there wider factors affecting social connections in NCH communities over this period?

SOCIAL VALUE AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Every **£1 invested** in FITC creates over **£18** in 'wellbeing value', the value that individuals place on the positive changes they reported.¹



creates

Wellbeing

The **Return on Investment** to the health sector over two years (from reduced healthcare costs and value of health gains) is **£8.16** for every **£1** spent on FITC.²



spent creates

value for health sector

The value of the contribution of volunteers developed through FITC amounts to just under £130,000.3



£130,000

MAKING SURE WE ONLY ACCOUNT FOR THE **OUTCOMES THAT FITC IS RESPONSIBLE FOR**

ATTRIBUTION

How much of the change is FITC responsible for? Participants state FITC is directly responsible for 75% of the positive changes they experienced.

DEADWEIGHT

What would have happened anyway, without FITC? Less than half of FITC respondents state that they would have taken up another similar activity without FITC.

DISPLACEMENT

Has it shifted activity from elsewhere?

Only 5% of respondents say that FITC replaced an activity they were already taking part in.

* Using the National Institute of Clinical Evidence's (NICE) own measure to assess the cost-effectiveness of interventions (EQ-5D)

1 HACT Value Calculator 2 NICE Return on Investment tool for Physical Activity 3 Sport England, Economic Value of Sport – Local Model





SO, WHAT NEXT?

Importance of sustainment/transition: The findings show that participants best achieve sustained activity levels when they continue with the activity sessions. Changes to the project model, as a result of necessary responses to project conditions (e.g. lack of volunteers, popularity of subsidised gym access), means that FITC has had to modify its exit/sustainment strategy as the initial funded market development phase ends.

Future of FITC: NCH is committed to continuing FITC, and has created a permanent Project Manager post. The Project Manager will support the continued offer of free or low cost activities for NCH tenants. Plans include: Supporting successful community classes to become self-funding, maintaining the FITC website as a signposting hub to local offers and activities, commitment to continue the Golden Games, supporting the development of volunteer/resident Activators and continuing to support the development of a community fitness workforce through NCH's Tenant Academy.

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