

CASE STUDY

# COUNTY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP AT WORK IN THE ENGLISH REGIONS

The role of the county sports partnership (CSP) is to provide a coherent and structured approach to the development of sport and physical activity across each of the nine regions in England through a collaboration of the public, private and voluntary sectors. Integral to the partnership are all those involved in sport and physical activity across a region, but principally the local authorities, school sport partnerships and national governing bodies of sport.

The partnerships have the capacity to influence and lead sport and physical activity at a regional level and to draw together key stakeholders from within and beyond the sports sector. This key coordinating role is vital to ensure efforts and resources are maximised and that the country as a whole starts becoming more active and successful.

CSPs were tasked with completing a county workforce development plan. This involves recognition of current skill levels of the workforce and identifying any skills gaps or shortages. The aim of the plan is to address the training needs and improve the skills of all those involved in the organisation and delivery of sport and physical activity and ultimately increase the levels of participation.

Active Norfolk is a county sports partnership that covers Norfolk County Council and the seven district and borough councils in the county including Norwich City Council, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn. Active Norfolk's vision is 'to make Norfolk an active, healthy and successful sporting county.'

Ben Jones is the workforce development manager for Active Norfolk. SkillsActive spoke to him about his involvement with the CSP workforce development plans in the county.

What difference do you hope the workforce development plans will make to sports participation in Norfolk?

This is the first time that opportunities for the sporting workforce in the county have been truly needs led, so we're aware that an increase in participation won't happen overnight. We hope though and sincerely believe that the improvement in the skill sets of the workforce will result in a continuous and sustained improvement in the quantity and quality of provision, resulting in a significant increase in participation from this point onwards.



How are the plans coming along in the grassroots clubs?

The plans are working well on the ground, with a large number of clubs coming on board with the workforce development plan. We think the response has been so positive because of the work we did with a wide range of clubs during the research phase of the project. This means that clubs can take ownership of the resulting training opportunities, as these have been produced taking their needs into account.

How are the plans moving forward?

The next phase will mean more work assessing the training needs of individuals and organisations. We aim to assess the needs of as many of the workforce as possible to ensure our training evolves, and most importantly, remains needs led. We're currently seeking to recruit a full-time workforce development officer to increase our capacity. Finally,

we intend to offer new, diverse and affordable training opportunities to more of the sporting workforce, and provide further development opportunities to those who have benefitted from the first year of the project.

We're confident that the investment we're making in the workforce will improve the infrastructure of sport in the county, resulting in not only an increase in participation, but also an improvement in levels of performance, and safer environments for our young people to be physically active.



"We intend to offer new, diverse and affordable training opportunities to more of the sporting workforce."

BEN JONES, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, ACTIVE NORFOLK



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