

Urban Sport & Urban Play Summer Activity Pilot Report

26.7.24 - 29.8.24



01 Background & Context



Over the summer of 2024, Hartlepool Sport/The PFC Trust held ten free, town wide, pop up events aimed at getting families more physically active and promoting a love of movement through a series of fun activities and games, irrespective of financial circumstances.

Urban Sport utilised the Hartlepool Sport Club Network with grass roots clubs delivering sports tasters and skill games from mainstream sports like rugby, athletics and basketball to more niche activities like cheerleading and martial arts, all aimed at getting the whole family involved.



Urban Play on the other hand, included activities and games designed to challenge and reshape families' perceptions of what physical activity is and target the self proclaimed 'coach potatoes' and reluctant sporty types through activities and games such as bubble blowing, chalk obstacle courses, target games and trails.

The rationale behind the Urban Sport and Urban Play initiative was as follows:

- To address some of the barriers to sport and physical activity in Hartlepool.
- To help tackle the obesity crisis by promoting a sit less, move more culture across Hartlepool.
- To provide free activities for all, over the summer holidays, not limited to families in receipt of free school meals.
- To create opportunities for the whole family to be active and move together in a fun way.
- Build positive collaborative working relationships with local sports clubs and like-minded organisations and grow the charity.



To address some of the barriers to sport and physical activity in Hartlepool.

There have never been so many sports and physical activities in Hartlepool for those who can travel across town, afford the kit and the session fees.

However, the reality is that a lot of families simply cannot access sports clubs, classes or groups that promote physical activity due to cost, travel, location, time, special educational needs... to name just a few of the barriers preventing them from doing so.

Hartlepool Sport have had many discussions with StreetGames about their ‘Doorstep Sport’ model (Figure 1), which aims to remove barriers to sport and physical activity through the delivery of activities at the right place, at the right time etc. with a look to how we could implement it through the Urban Sport & Urban Play initiative.

Figure 1.



A key principle was to utilise existing ‘locally trusted organisations’ such as sports clubs and work collaboratively to activate community spaces, and create seamless pathways into continued activities.

To help tackle the obesity crisis by promoting a sit less, move more culture across Hartlepool.

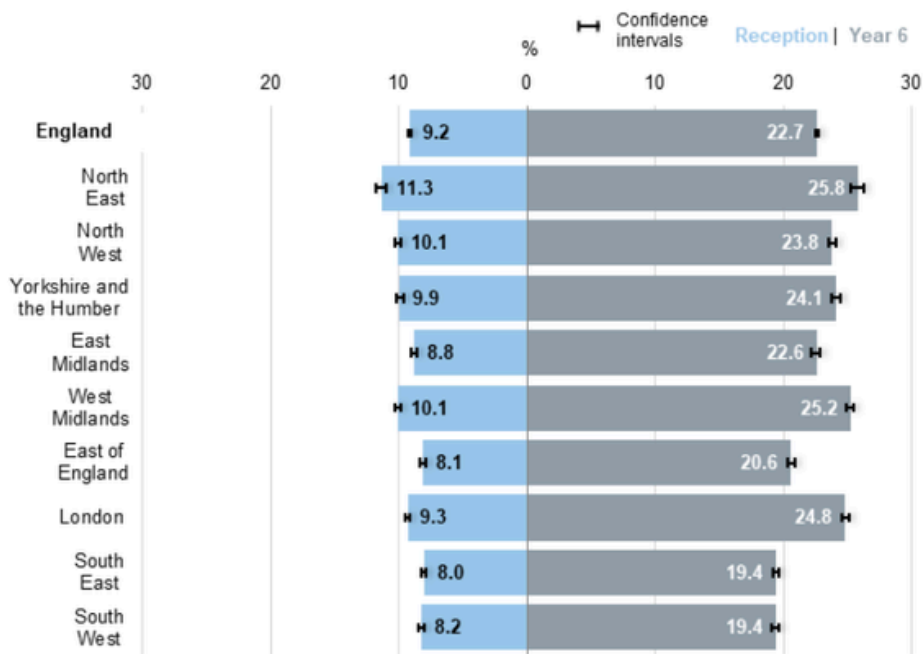
According to the most recent data from the NCMP - National Child Measurement Programme, more than 1 in 5 children aged 4 to 5 years and more than 3 in 10 aged 10 to 11 years are overweight or living with obesity in England.

To make matters worse, as of 2022/23, the highest levels of Reception and Year 6 aged children living with obesity were both recorded in the North East (see Figure 2).

Furthermore, Hartlepool has the second highest number of recorded Reception aged children living with obesity and the fifth highest number of recorded Year 6 aged children living with obesity compared to areas of a similar demographic (see Figure 3, 4 & 5).



Obesity prevalence by region (based on postcode of child) and school year, 2022/23



For more information: Table 3b National Child Measurement Programme, England, 2022/23 School Year

Figure 2.

Prevalence of obesity in Hartlepool by age
National Child Measurement Programme 2022 to 2023

In 2022 to 2023, 12.7% in reception (aged 4 to 5 years) were living with obesity



In 2022 to 2023, 27.5% in year 6 (aged 10 to 11 years) were living with obesity



Figure 3.

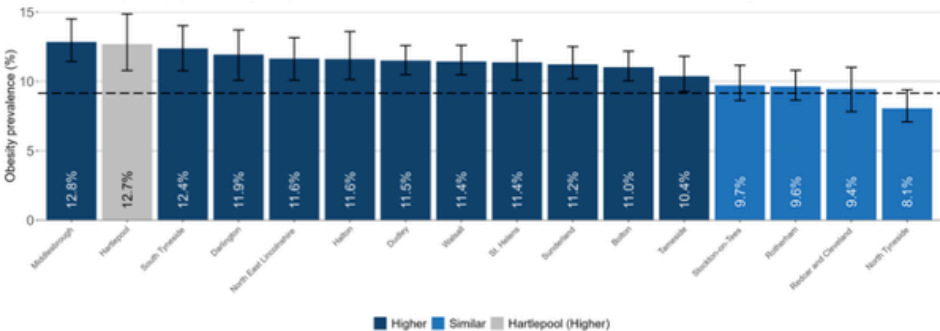
Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

Child obesity in Hartlepool

Prevalence of obesity, National Child Measurement Programme 2022 to 2023
Hartlepool compared to its statistical nearest neighbours, CIPFA 2021

Children in reception (aged 4 to 5 years)

England: 9.2%



CIPFA lookup not available for geographic areas that were created since April 2023
Local authorities are compared to England value shown as a dashed line on the chart

95% confidence intervals are shown

Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

Child obesity in Hartlepool

Prevalence of obesity, National Child Measurement Programme 2022 to 2023

Hartlepool compared to its statistical nearest neighbours, CIPFA 2021

Children in year 6 (aged 10 to 11 years)

England: 22.7%

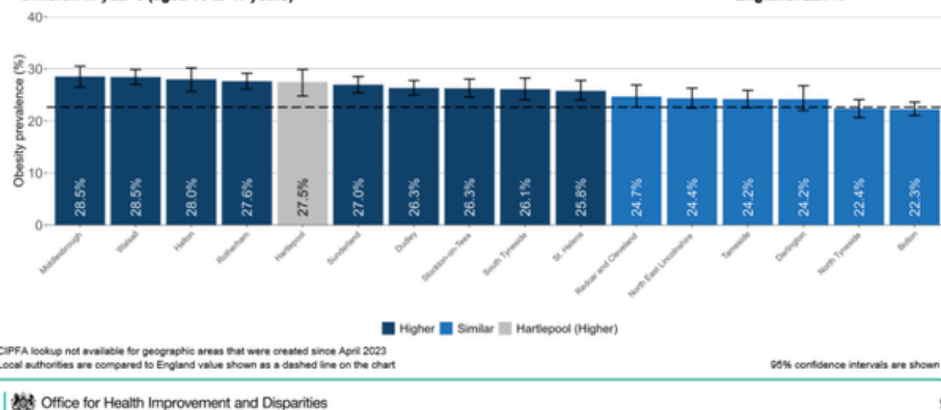


Figure 5.

Therefore, when you consider the facts relating to childhood obesity rates in Hartlepool and then also factor in that children's activity levels have a tendency to drop during school holidays when days are less structured, the reality is that some children face an annual, six week, summer of inactivity - a contributing factor to an obesogenic lifestyle.



'Children's activity levels usually drop during the holidays when they no longer have daily PE sessions, playtime at school, and no travel to and from school.'
Former Public Health Minister Maggie Throup in an article for GOV.UK

As Hartlepool Sport's mission is to 'help support the wider aims of helping people lead healthy and active lifestyles', we wanted to do something about this and created the Urban Sport & Urban Play initiative in response.

While tackling obesity remains one of the greatest long-term health challenges faced by the country, Public Health England's latest Better Health Campaign identifies that 'moving more' is a key behaviour change that needs to be addressed if people are to lose weight and prevent or delay the onset of serious diseases such as obesity.



'The campaign aims to reach millions of people who need to lose weight, encouraging them to make behaviour changes to eat better and move more to prevent or delay the onset of serious diseases.'
Department for Health & Social Care - Tackling Obesity; Empowering Adults and Children to Live Healthier Lives

Urban Play was designed with behaviour change in mind as our aim was to redefine what people perceive physical activity to be, which for most conjures up images of hot, sweaty school PE lessons or gruelling gym workouts and instead, shift their thinking to view all movement as physical activity.

Combine this way of thinking with activities and games that are fun and pique people's interest and the result is that more people are motivated to move because they want to.

An example of how Urban Sport & Urban Play implemented this two-pronged, 'all movement is physical activity and can be fun' approach is through our Imposter Trails (a nod to the popular Among Us computer game) whereby families had to find all the trail markers around the park or space to work out which character on their trail sheet was missing and not on the trail, hence the imposter.

We also included popular themes and pop culture e.g. dinosaurs, Olympics and minibeasts within trail designs to appeal to more families.



To provide free activities for all, over the summer holidays, not limited to families in receipt of free school meals.

Recent changes to the Holiday Activity Fund has meant that only children in receipt of free school meals are eligible for free, HAF funded activities during the summer holidays.

This has had serious implications for children with working parents as those that have previously relied on free HAF activities as a way for their child to be active or socialise with others during the holidays, have had to pay for their child's place, putting unwanted strain on the purse strings.

However, for some parents paying for a place is simply not an option due to the serious financial pressure they are under with the cost of living being at an all time high, leaving them with little choice but to keep their children at home or look for alternative free activities.



'One in five parents/carers said they were using free activities for their children to socialise with friends instead of paid, while 12% said they'd reduced the regularity of paid activities.'

Active Lives Children and Young People Survey 2022-23





‘Children and young people from the least affluent families are the least likely to be active, with only 44% meeting the Chief Medical Officers’ guidelines – compared to 55% of those from the most affluent families.’
Active Lives Children and Young People Survey 2022-23

By running Urban Sport & Urban Play over summer, we provided free activities for all families, regardless of their financial circumstances. Thus providing families, who otherwise could not afford to pay for activities or days out for their children, ways to be active or socialise for free in wake of a reduced free activity offering across Hartlepool.



To create opportunities for the whole family to be active and move together in a fun way. According to figures from the [Health Survey for England](#), 33% of men and 45% of women aged 16 and over do not meet the UK Chief Medical Officer’s physical activity guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week.

Undoubtedly, parents are one of the biggest influencers in their children’s lives so when children see their parents perform a certain type of behaviour they are likely to imitate and follow suit. This is also true for physical activity, which is why a whole family approach to physical activity is necessary if we are to make real change and increase the number of adults and children meeting the UK Chief Medical Officer’s physical activity guidelines.



‘As a parent, you act as a role model for your children. When they see you being active – and especially if you’re positive about it – they’re more likely to want to take part.’
BUPA - The benefits of exercising as a family this summer

However, a survey we put forward to our Social Prescribers Network, revealed that there is a gap in provision when it comes to physical activities aimed at whole family involvement in Hartlepool (see Figure 6).

4. In your opinion, what physical activities do you feel there is a lack of across the town or have previously had difficulty signposting patients to?

[More Details](#)

- Female only groups 1
- Male only groups 0
- Physical activities aimed at the ... 3
- SEND and inclusive physical acti... 0
- Pickleball/Spikeball/Whiffle 1
- Other 1



Figure 6.

To plug this gap, at least over summer, Urban Sport & Urban Play adopted a whole family approach, encouraging parental and multigenerational involvement in the activities and games.

For most parents, it became obvious that physical activity was a by-product to the fun and quality time spent with their families as they hunted high and low for minibeasts, explored areas looking for trail markers, threw beanbags into the mouth of a T-Rex and gave new sports like pickleball a go,

There were even tears from one little girl when it was time to go at one of the events because she did not want to leave.

Examples of cherished memories like this one, have a lasting impact on families and as a result, parents will seek out other Urban Sport & Urban Play events or similar experiences over summers to come.



Build positive collaborative working relationships with local sports clubs and like-minded organisations and grow the charity.

Hartlepool is fortunate to have so many amazing sports clubs and community organisations, doing great pockets of work across the town that it made sense to look at how we could link up and work together to reach more people and achieve our similar engagement aims and objectives.

For sports clubs, Urban Sport & Urban Play provided a paid platform to showcase what they do best and an opportunity for them to recruit new members for their club and grow their communities thus giving families and young people something to do and somewhere to go where they can be physically active and socialise, long after summer has ended.

For organisations such as Explore Hartlepool, Play Out Hartlepool and Hartlepool Borough Council, we complimented their events by extending the activity offer and creating a greater 'menu of choice' so families had more activities and games to choose from on the day. It also looked good from a participation perspective on social media since a range of organisations were plugging the same event on their channels and as a result reached a wider audience.



By engaging the communities of other sports clubs and organisations in this way, we are able to shine a spotlight on the work Hartlepool Sport and The PFC Trust do, which in turn increases brand awareness and creates cheerleaders of the charity with the potential to translate into future patrons or volunteers.

Engagement & Impact 02

Sports clubs and activities:

1. West Hartlepool Rugby Club

West Hartlepool Rugby Football Club played a crucial role in offering rugby sessions tailored to different age groups and skill levels. Their involvement included fundamental skills and the ABC of physical exercise and movement were well-received by participants of all ages. Their expertise helped foster a love for rugby and promote teamwork and sportsmanship.

Number of events attended: 3



2. Hartlepool Hawks Cheerleading Academy

The Hartlepool Hawks Cheerleading Academy brought a burst of energy and enthusiasm to the programme with their cheerleading sessions. These sessions provided children with the opportunity to learn cheerleading routines, improve coordination and balance, and build confidence.

Number of events attended: 9

3. Huskies Basketball

Huskies Basketball contributed to the programme by offering basketball skills. These sessions were designed to improve participants' dribbling and shooting. The interactive and dynamic nature of these activities helped engage young people and promote a healthy lifestyle through sport.

Number of events attended: 8



4. Inspire Coaching

Inspire Coaching provided a variety of football based skill sessions. Their involvement ensured that the programme catered to diverse interests and skill levels, providing high-quality coaching and support. Their sessions emphasised fun and inclusivity, encouraging all participants to take part and enjoy the benefits of physical activity.

Number of events attended: 1

5. Hartlepool Wadokai

Hartlepool Wadokai offered karate sessions that introduced participants to martial arts techniques and self-discipline. Their involvement was particularly beneficial for developing focus, respect, and physical fitness. The karate classes were structured to accommodate various skill levels, making them accessible to newcomers and experienced practitioners alike.

Number of events attended: 5



6. New Perspectives - North East

Wellness Walking Group



New Perspectives - North East Wellness Walking Group is a walking group where everyone feels welcome. They offer a variety of activities to suit all needs and abilities, from gentle strolls to invigorating hikes. Their activity is designed to enhance walkers' well-being while building community connections and enjoying nature. Led by trained professionals, their walks ensure safety, enjoyment, and opportunities for relaxation and socialising.

Number of events attended: 1

Engagement and Impact - Urban Sport & Urban Play

Date	Location	Medal Packs	Trail Sheets	SS - Stealth Steps	Mid-Point Headcount	Trials or New Members
Fri 26th July	Headland	58	28	1096	80	
Sun 28th July	King George V Field	18	11	1052	63	
Tue 30th July	Rossmere Park	80	14	1019	66	
Sun 3rd August	Grange School					
Wed 7th August	Summerhill Country Park	56	N/A	N/A	41	
Fri 9th August	Greyfields	16	7	924	50	
Tue 13th August	Hartlepool Supporters Club	36	9	516	49	
Wed 14th August	Seaton Carew	60	15	536	46	
Thu 15th August	Clavering Park					
Wed 21st August	Headland	16	10	1096	32	
Fri 27th August	Rossmere Park	14	12	1019	16	
Thu 29th August	Ward Jackson Park	25	2	1401	58	
	Totals	379	108	8659	501	41+
	Ratio 1:3		324			

Please note - Events in red, did not go ahead due to the Headland Carnival Parade or there was a yellow weather warning in place. Had these events gone ahead, the totals will have been notably higher.

From the data, we are able to estimate that over the ten days, we managed to engage between 379 and 501 adults and children, clock up 8659 Stealth Steps and have 41+ young people went on to trial or become members at the sports clubs or organisations.

For further information regarding data, consult the infographic on the next page.

More information relating to the data we collected e.g. Medal Packs, Trail Sheets, SS - Stealth Steps, Mid-Point Headcount and Trials or New Members, will be covered in subsequent pages.



HARTLEPOOL
SPORT

URBAN SPORT & URBAN PLAY

DATA INFOGRAPHIC

Summer Activity Report Pilot

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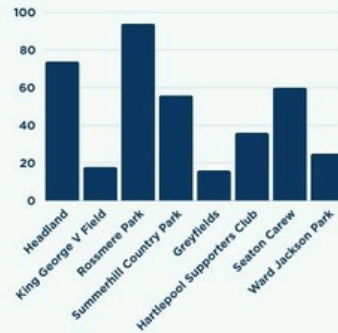


All six sports clubs involved in Urban Sport & Urban Play want to collaborate and work with Hartlepool Sport in the future.



of participants went on to trial or become new members at a sports club.

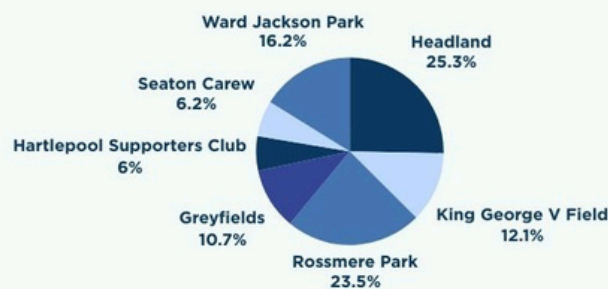
The number of medal packs handed out over the eight locations:



108 trail sheets were issued over ten days.

324 adults and young people took part in the trails.

The percentage of Stealth Steps completed at seven of the locations:



379-501

Adults and young people took part over the ten days.



62.6

The average headcount at the midway point of an event.

Mini Olympics Medal Packs

As the Urban Sport & Urban Play initiative coincided with the 2024 Olympics and Paralympics, we wanted to bring the spirit of the games to Hartlepool.



One way we did this was through our Mini Olympics Medal Packs, which were issued to children at the events and contained a bouncy ball, sporty sticker, a block of air dry clay, a ribbon, ideas for Mini Olympic events that could be played at home and instructions for how to make an Olympic Medal.

Our aim was to use the Olympics as a vehicle to build positive relationships around sport by exposing families to lesser known ones such as breaking, footgolf etc., and applying our 'activity by stealth' approach to ensure physical activity remained secondary to fun and putting everyone on a level playing field having not tried the sports before.

For some, this translated as chasing and running after the bouncy ball and for others, a friendly competition of sibling vs. sibling or kids vs. parents in a game of garden volleyballoon.

We also ran an Olympic, two week theme so families were able to try some of the activities and games at the events including bubble discus and pool noodle fencing.

By exciting and inspiring children through sport in this way, we hope families will be more open to trying sporty experiences in the future.

Furthermore, we also ran a competition over the summer that encouraged families to take photos or videos of themselves completing the Mini Olympic activities at home, participating in activities and games at the Urban Sport & Urban Play events and of their medals so even the most 'sportsphobic' of families, were drawn in by the lure of a craft or a chance to win a prize.



Trail Sheets

Physical copies of the trail sheets were handed out to families at each of the events. However, it is worth noting that one trail sheet did not equate to one player (1:1) as multiple players or family members were often working together to find the trail markers and working from one trail sheet. For example, the highest recorded number of players in a single party was ten and the lowest recorded number of players in a single party was one.

Therefore, by applying the rule of 1:3 (one trail sheet equating to three players, roughly one parent and two children) as per the national average of children per household - 1.9 according to the Office of National Statistics, we can estimate the number of players that took part on each of the days.

SS - Stealth Steps

SS are the number of steps it took for the average 39-year old, fairly active, 5'2, female to complete the trail at each of the locations. However, it is important to bear in mind that the location of the trail markers were known, unlike the families who had to look for them.

With these steps counting towards the [NHS' guidelines](#) of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week for adults aged between 19 - 64 and an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous intensity physical activity a day across the week for 5 - 18 year olds.

The SS figures are really useful in finding out what proportion of this was achieved through the 'activity by stealth' activities and games.



A Mid-Point Headcount

A physical count of attendees at the halfway point of the event (around the one hour mark).

Trials and New Sports Club Members

A figure attained through follow ups with sports clubs that were involved in the Urban Sport & Urban Play initiative that will help to shape the Exit Strategy and future collaborative work.

03 Feedback



Top fan

Cindy Stringer

We attended this event yesterday and had a really good Afternoon. Kept the kids entertained. It's absolutely amazing what you're doing ❤️

6w Love Reply

2 ❤️

The feedback we received from families, young people, sports clubs and the organisations involved was overwhelmingly positive.

Videos of some of the events can be found on the Hartlepool Sport Facebook page.



Gail Parker

Such a great event. My boys had all the sporting fun. Thank you to all the clubs and coaches involved for a lovely few hours. X



You, Gemma Louise, Sarah Parker and 7 others

1 comment 3 shares

Love

Comment

Copy

Share



Sarah Parker

Thank you! We loved being involved with your sessions this summer and look forward to more shared work in the future!

5d Love Reply

4 ❤️

“

*It was lovely to see families and kids actively participating; Esther and I particularly enjoyed the bug trail and basketball with Huskies Basketball. This is a fantastic program, and we look forward to seeing everyone again at the next event on August 27! - **Quewone Bailey-Fleet, Rossmere Ward Councillor***



”



Christine Creamer

We had a fab day x



5w Like Reply

“

I would like to thank you all for the several events that you have provided FREE OF CHARGE for the residents of Hartlepool. Many Mams need events like yours across the town to help entertain their children.

I've heard lots of positive feedback from parents, from the art and craft activities to the sports tasters including tennis, basketball, karate and football.

*The timed lap games that both parents and children could join in with were not only fun, but also good for mental health and wellness - **Sue Little, Seaton Ward Councillor***

”



“

A new starter joined our over 50's session and when I asked how they had found out about us, they said it was through one of the Urban Sport & Urban Play events that they had taken their grandchildren to - **Hartlepool Wadokai, Sensei Amy.**

”

“

We had 3 young girls at the Headland who stayed through the full day and literally begged their grandma (who's not from the town) to bring them to sessions the very next day and they all came along and loved it! - **Huskies Basketball, Coach John.**



”



Huskies Basketball

Always a pleasure to work with Hartlepool Sport and the incredible team that are working so hard to give young people such brilliant experiences. Keep up the great work...we're ¹⁰⁰ with you in providing opportunities to support the health and wellbeing of the people of Hartlepool! 🐾🍷💙

5d Love Reply



Flwrs Becca

My little boy started after coming to one of the play out sessions and it's his favourite sport activity and I think it's fantastic. Very inclusive and the coaches seem very kind and encouraging

5d Love Reply

3 🍷👍

“

I had the pleasure of attending an Urban Play event, and I was truly impressed by the innovative concept.

The initiative to offer free play sessions in urban areas, ensuring children have access to engaging activities during school holidays, is both commendable and essential.

As a leader of New Perspectives, I am grateful to have been asked to be involved and deeply appreciate the positive impact this program has on the community.

Congratulations to all those involved for delivering such a meaningful and accessible opportunity for children - **New Perspectives North East Wellness Walking Group, Director Natalie.**

”



Explore Hartlepool

6 days ago · 🌐

...

Thank you **Hartlepool Sport!** You have brought joy and excitement to children and families across Hartlepool this summer. 🌞 We can't wait to team up with you again in the future! 🌞

#explorehartlepool #communitypartners #summeractivities #hartlepoolsport

Conclusion and Review 04

The Urban Sport & Urban Play initiative was a resounding success, achieving several key outcomes:

- **Increased Participation** - The initiative saw accessibility of free sessions in local parks and open spaces. One young man asked if he and his friends could use the Headland Town Moor football and basketball courts at any time as he was unaware they are free to use and open to the public.
- **Community Engagement** - The programme fostered a sense of community by bringing together individuals and families from different backgrounds. The collaborative nature of the initiative, involving local clubs and organisations such as Explore Hartlepool and Play Out Hartlepool, strengthened community ties and created a supportive environment for all.
- **Health and Wellbeing** - Participants benefited from physical activity. The variety of activities available ensured that there was something for everyone, hopefully promoting a lifelong appreciation for sport and exercise.
- **Skill Development** - Through engaging with different sports and activities, participants developed new skills and improved existing ones.



Furthermore, the 41+ young people that went on trial or became members at the sports clubs is fantastic. For those 41+ families and young people, they now have something to do and somewhere to go on a regular basis, not just for summer.

What is more, many of the sports clubs and organisations involved expressed an interest in collaborative working and wanted to join forces again in the future.

This will be an opportunity to explore ways of increasing the activity provision for families to be physically active together in Hartlepool on a regular basis, not just over summer using the Urban Sport & Urban Play model and could help raise the profile of other Hartlepool Sport initiatives such as Join the Movement as more organisations join the network.

Finally, the Urban Sport & Urban Play events created opportunities for the young coaches or volunteers that came along with the clubs to take on supportive roles, helping younger children or adults new to the sport and unsure of what to do.

Therefore, similar initiatives could be used as mentoring opportunities and a way to upskill volunteers with an interest in sport or working with families.

05 Challenges

As is the nature of most pilots, not everything ran smoothly.

There were a few challenges we faced in getting Urban Sport & Urban Play off the ground and ensuring a good turnout:

- **Limited time frame** - The quick turnaround time from appointing two new members of the team to planning and delivering the Urban Sport & Urban Play initiative was a little over a month, which did not give us a lot of time to pitch the initiative to sports clubs and advertise the events to the wider public.
- **Licencing and Permissions** - Despite the events running in public parks and green spaces at no cost, the issuing of licences was a drawn out process with lots of back and forth communication between the council and the team. Not only was this time consuming, but there was no clear policy or procedure outlining exactly what was needed and why.
- **Inconsistent Branding and COMM's** - As we were juggling the running of the Urban Sport & Urban Play initiative with our day to day work, some events were not publicised on our Facebook page until the day of or not at all. Also, the physical signage we put up, part way through the initiative, should have been put up in advance so people could plan their visits to coincide with the events.



- **Litter and dirty nappies** - At a couple of the sites, the team were faced with overflowing litter bins in areas frequented by children so we had to take time to clear the site before it could be used. While we're happy to do our bit to make Hartlepool a better place, it did eat into our set-up time so an idea may be to invite Hartlepool Big Town Tidy Up to come along to other Hartlepool Sport community events and have families carry out litter picking as an activity using gloves and litter pickers.
- **Weather** - Unfortunately, we had to cancel an event due to heavy rain and a yellow weather warning. Moving forward, it may be useful to have a Plan B so in the eventuality of rain, we have an indoor option that we can redirect people to with ample notice.
- **Event Clash** - There was one event that ran at the same time as the annual Headland Carnival Parade, this was an oversight on our part and in the future, we will be mindful of wider events.



06 Special Mentions



Hartlepool Sport and The PFC Trust would like to thank all of the sports clubs and organisations that took part in the Urban Play/Urban Sport initiative, their contributions made it something really special.

We would like to thank:

- Explore Hartlepool
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Hartlepool Hawks
- Hartlepool Wadokai
- Huskies Basketball
- Inspire Coaching
- New Perspectives North East - Wellness Walking Group
- Play Out Hartlepool
- West Hartlepool Rugby Club



We would also like to extend our thanks to all the families and young people that came along to the events, we hope you made some fantastic memories this summer!



For more information about Hartlepool Sport and The PFC Trust, go to the Hartlepool Sport or The PFC Trust Facebook pages or alternatively, visit - www.hartlepoolsport.co.uk or www.thepfctrust.org.

Report Written by Louise George, Phil Wallis and the Hartlepool Sport Team.

