



GREATERSPORT

Together Fund: Phase 3 Impact & Learning Update





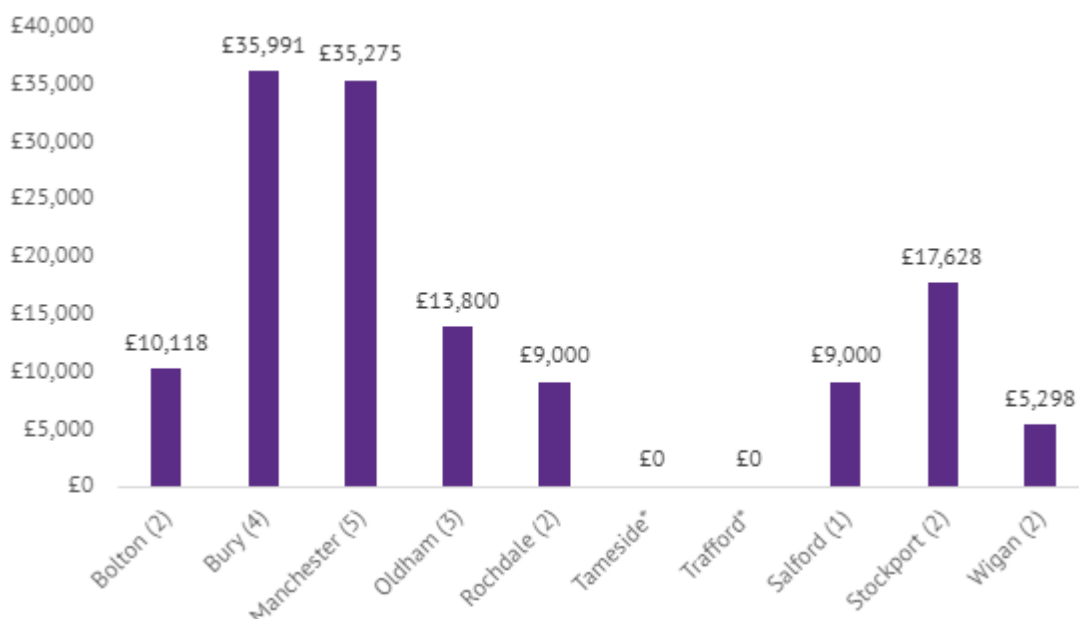
The Tackling Inequalities Fund (Together Fund, TF) was launched in April 2020 in response to Covid-19, providing £20m of National Lottery funding from Sport England to support community groups across the country. The fund has focused on the communities that have been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, to try and prevent the inequalities gap from widening and to reduce the impact on activity levels.

In Greater Manchester (GM) we have encouraged new organisations and demographics to engage with the grant to ensure we were reaching the most in need and genuinely tackling the health inequalities within our neighborhoods. TF has enabled us to build a new relationship with local organisations within GM and strengthen existing relations between us and our communities. Phase 3 saw nearly £170,000 worth of funds reached 80% of GM borough's, engaging with a diverse audience, the majority of grants funded projects that targeted LSEG, Women & Girls, demographics from culturally diverse & minority backgrounds and for groups of people suffering long term health conditions (LTHC) and disabilities. Phase 3 also boasted roughly 85% new organisations being funded.



Healing Hearts and Minds CIC Project, Rochdale

Investment by borough in Phase 3



Phase 3 approved grant allocation, total of 21 projects with the majority of grants costing £9,000-£10,000. *Borough did not apply as they utilised Phase 1 & 2 underspend.

The grants focused on tackling long term health condition (LTHC) , increasing the inclusion of local provision to enable people with disabilities to be active, opening up opportunities for demographics from low socio-economic groups , specifically women and girls to get active and diversify local provision to encourage BAME communities to increase their physical activity behaviors at a local level . The grants disrupted not only aimed to increase physical levels in targeted groups intrinsically but also capture the indirect benefits of engaging in community activities that sustain efforts to support active lives such as community cohesion, increased sense of confidence and cross-generational connection . For instance a project ran in Stockport by The Garden House ran weekly sessions for up to 20 adults with a range of disabilities that look to increase physical activity through guided walk/ wheelchair tours around following a Breathe sensory trail. The participants claimed that the project enabled them to have a space to be active as a group which increased their sense of belonging and social connections within their local community. The sensory walk increased their physical activity levels (twice a week) which they stated improved their physical health and through the both the socialisation of being in a group and the nature element improved their mental health and felt happier. Projects like these demonstrates the importance of building new connections within the third sector, working with charities such as The Garden House enable us to reach communities who previously may have not been supported effectively, build their trust and thus an effective working relationship in the pursuit to living active lives. .

“It’s good to have something to look forward to that’s ‘me time’ and knowing a lot of the other lads feel that way is good too.”

Bury Basketball Alliance CIC Project, Bury

“The project has helped to reconnect with our groups and show we can support and impact in a much wider way “

Garden House Project, Stockport



Phase 3 Learnings

The Together fund demonstrates a new way of working in the pursuit to tackle inactivity and community engagement . The fund enables us to connect with new organisations who can reach previously untouched priority audiences and enable us to learn from the processes of community connection . From Phase 1 & 2 we have learnt that to tackle inequalities effectively the workforce needs to connect with the target audience at a local level (community connectors) in order to build trust and develop effective relationships. Phase 1 and 2 also taught us that having some flexibility in the application process (how the grant was spent) enables each grant to suit the needs of each community more effectively . In order to put this learnings to practise we developed a GM Moving Equalities panel with the purpose of the panel to specify the need and the process within GM at a local level and to make informed decisions on processing specific grants for Phase 3.

The panel members demonstrated the ability to connect to priority audiences effectively and advocated their needs in the grant process. The panel enable a frequent , in depth and useful communication network with community groups which increased the richness of applications leading to more awards being granted. This appeared to be vital in supporting new and non-traditional organisations accessing the grant and tackling inequalities within their neighbourhoods and extending the GM network. Working in this way not only brought increased insight but led to wider wrap-around support for groups via other partner organisations and in turn empowered communities . It enabled the upskilling of smaller organisations who previously did not have the capacity to access community funds learn how to write bids, implement effective change and effectively govern their processes through training opportunities . This approach has evidenced the importance of local knowledge, provided a platform for the unheard to speak and built vital new connections across GM with micro-organisations . This new narrative is empowering local citizens of GM to take action and build community cohesion. For instance the Football For Humanity project ran in Manchester worked with over 10 different community organisations to ensure their target audience not only had a positive experience with physical activity but were supported in their wider community , highlighting the wider outcomes of being physical activity. This approach to community engagement is vital in the legacy of community cohesion and efforts to tackle health inequalities in GM .



Developed training pathways



Connected to 11 organisations



Reduction in feelings of isolation & anxiety

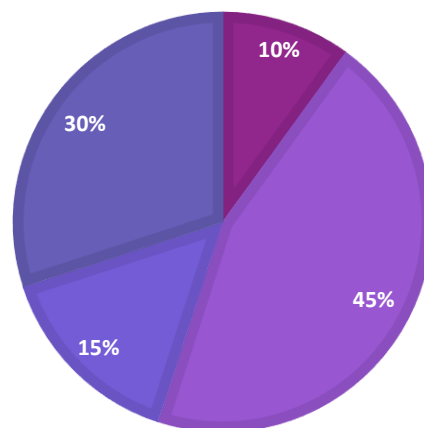
The project aimed to address the psychosocial needs of refugees and people seeking asylum, victims of racism and homelessness. The project used sport as a means to tackle issues such as isolation and mental health. It offered support and a safe place for up to 30 participants to take part in physical activity in their community. 30 regularly attending the activities, as well as the students, staff, and coordinators from the University who volunteered to help manage the athletic and social activities. Many of the participants reported to enjoy getting the opportunity to run around and make friends, with the majority of participants claiming that the sessions help reduced their anxiety and made them feel less isolated.



Projects that were delivered in phase 3 focused to engage with four key demographics, Low Socio Economic groups (LSEg), Women & Girls, demographics from culturally diverse & minority backgrounds and for groups of people suffering long term health conditions (LTHC) and disabilities. Projects engaged with multiple audiences but all had a priority target groups, nearly half of the projects used the funding to engage with BAME communities and almost a third engaged with LSEg. 10% of phase 3 provision funded activities that supported people with disabilities to be more physically active and a further 15% of the funds allocated was utilise to support provision for people with long term health conditions. The Supporting Sisters project in Bury illustrates well how a community group tackled LTHC (including mental health) through physical activity.

PHASE 3 PRIORITY AUDIENCES

■ Disabled People ■ BAME ■ People with long term health conditions ■ LSEG



Phase 3 project priority demographics, projects had multiple priority audiences with the majority of projects engaging with BAME communities and almost a third engaging with Low Socio Economic groups.

The project targeted a local group of just over 30 women who had expressed interest to take part in more physical activity. Many of the women (17-69 years) came from traditional cultural backgrounds from Pakistani, Bengali and Arab with the motivation to improve their physical health and wellbeing after the challenging 2 years (Pandemic). The projects aim was not only to get the group more active but allow them a platform to have a voice in their community but also an opportunity to make friends and to educate on how to live healthier lives. Alongside Swimming sessions they ran workshops that looked upskill the group in healthy eating and empowering them to make healthier choices for themselves and their families. The project also used reflection techniques after sessions to capture what the participants were feeling and to set goals for future sessions. The projects enabled the group to have a space where they could switch off from their day to day stresses and focus on themselves. Participants reported that this mix of education, social opportunities and action the project presented improved their sense of wellbeing and both their physical and mental health. Supporting Sisters demonstrate a granular understanding of what the participants needed to increase their physical activity levels and this was integral in securing the grant to deliver the provision. Projects like Supporting Sisters demonstrates the power of community cohesion when tackling LTHCs, enabling local people to have a shared experience which can be vital in developing the self-efficacy needed to tackle new challenges such as improvements to health.



Increased sense of well being

Diverse community





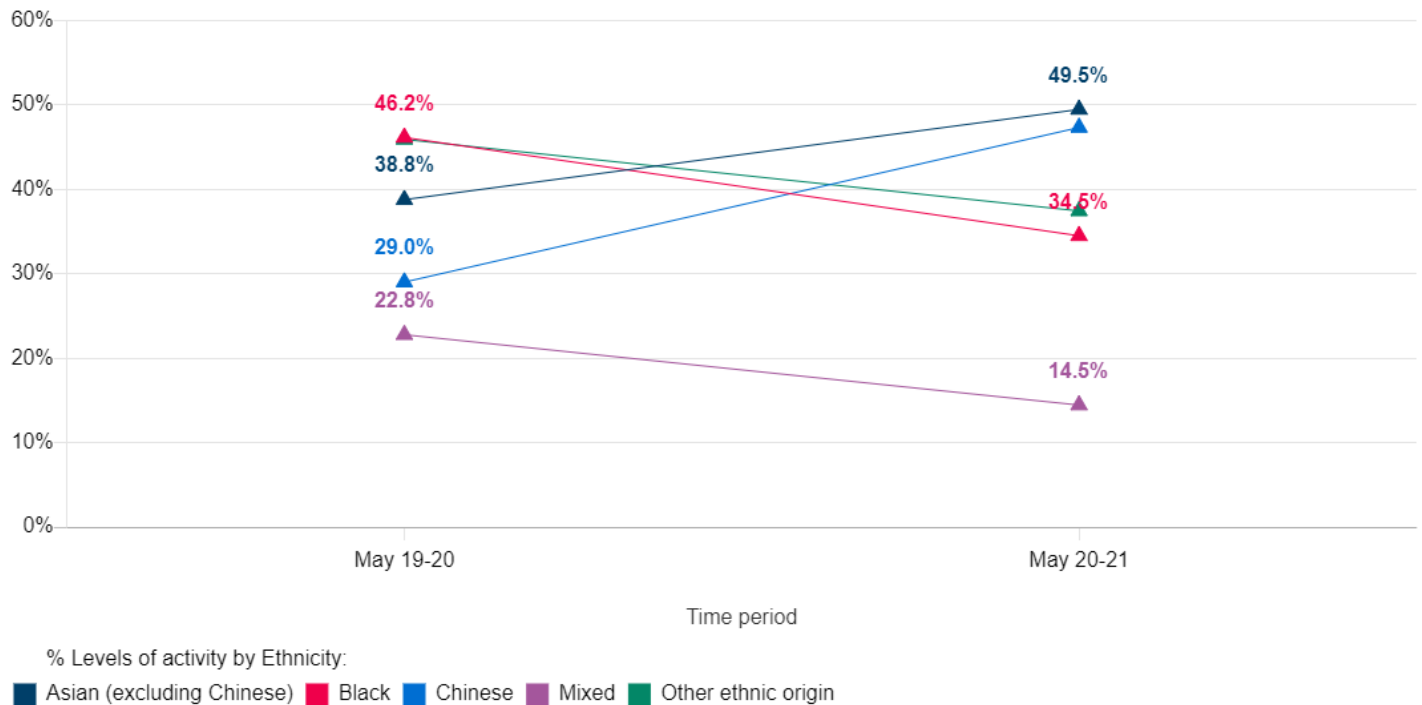
Improved physical health

“Generally since joining I feel as though I’m not out of breath as much when running up the stairs. I look forward to this every week”

Supporting Sisters project, Bury

From the feedback we have collected from Phase 3 grant applicants we have also learnt important lessons with regards to the process of both applying for the grant and the implementation of projects. Projects that enabled a process for Co designing the projects contents were well attended and demonstrated effective engagement outside of the intrinsic project delivering. Digital platforms were utilised by a number of projects which enabled participants to extend their newly established connections increasing a perceived sense of community cohesion. This may be crucial in creating a legacy for the Together Fund and empowering neighbourhoods to tackle the effects of health inequalities and the systems that exacerbate these inequalities.

Workforce is key, the individuals and the skill set they boast is crucial in having an effective impact of participants, projects that had an experienced and local volunteer taskforce demonstrated effective connections with both participants and other local services. These workforces were able to implement an empathetic delivery approach which led to higher levels of reported trust which can be key in developing long lasting connections. This empathy in delivery methods enabled projects to suit the needs and capacity of participants, creating a safe environment for participants to reflect and challenge their physical activity attitudes/behaviours. Projects that adopted a whole systems approach to tackling inactivity were able to engage with wider community services, develop a local and personal workforce and empowered previously unheard demographics to speak up. These all provide evidence for the sustainability of the impact the Together Fund has had on physical activity levels in communities across GM. We can see the impact that this approach has had on activity levels across GM’s communities. The most recent Active Lives data reflects a significant increase in reported activity levels in some BAME communities since the addition of TIF (Together Fund). It does also highlight more work is needed to connect with GM’s Asian and Chinese demographics.



Breakdown of BAME inactivity levels in GM, demonstrates a significant increase in reported activity levels in Black, Mixed and other ethnic groups since the addition of TIF (Together Fund). However reflects a significant increase in inactivity in GM’s Chinese and Asian populations.

The Together Fund enables us to tackle inactivity, health inequalities and the systems that worsen these from a bottom up, top down and middle out approach. Phase 3 has encouraged community empowerment and the connectivity needed to create the culture shift needed to prevent the inequalities gap from widening, improving the health of Greater Manchester.