

# TACKLING INEQUALITIES FUND EVALUATION

Independent Evaluation Summary April 2022







## Introduction

The Tackling Inequalities Fund (TIF) was launched by Sport England in April 2020 to make £20m of National Lottery funding available to support community groups in maintaining connections and physical activity opportunities in the recovery from Covid-19. The TIF also intended to support those disproportionately affected by Covid-19 and prevent the inequalities gap from widening due to falling activity levels.

The pandemic required urgent action and Sport England challenged their partners to work collaboratively, using their knowledge and understanding of local contexts to ensure the TIF was distributed to the right places quickly. In response Active Lincolnshire developed new ways of working by building on existing relationships and establishing new ones to distribute the TIF. This evaluation retrospectively explored the TIF in Lincolnshire between November 2021 and February 2022 to understand how Active Lincolnshire, Sport England and partners across Lincolnshire worked collaboratively to find sustainable approaches to reduce health inequalities through physical activity using the TIF.

## Key questions

Key questions to inform the evaluation were as follows:

- How have organisations worked together with the TIF? (e.g. how have organisations been involved, what roles have organisations played?)
- How has the TIF impacted on impacted on health inequalities in the short term and long term? (e.g. has sustainable change been achieved?)
- What is the learning from work associated with the TIF and how can this be used to inform work in the future?

## Methods

The data collection methods comprised of semi-structured interviews with key individuals involved in the work. Participants were identified by key stakeholders from Active Lincolnshire. Ten participants were invited to take part in the evaluation and nine agreed to take part.

## The TIF application process:

#### April 2020: Sport England launched Tacking Inequalities Fund



£20m of National Lottery funding from Sport England to support community groups across the country. It aimed to support communities disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, to try to reduce widening of the inequalities gap through reduction in activity levels.

Active Lincs An opportunity to work differently with existing partners and new partners

**TIF Application Process** 

Active Lincs: Local collaborative response Key partners from Health, Local Authorities, Community and Voluntary organisations brought together in districts to discuss TIF opportunities and invite applications.

> "We know our local area so we can work with our partners better."

Sport England

An opportunity to work differently with partners

#### **Active Lincs**

Responsibility for budget based on local knowledge

> Lincs to support applicants delivery eyond.

3.000

Active Lincs	Active Lincs	Sport England	Active
Applications co-written with partners to maximise chance of success.	Applications reviewed before submission to Sport England.	Final decisions on awards.	Continue t successful a through and be
70 Proposals	60 Submitted	58 Funded	£248 Distrik

Distributed

#### Active Lincs working differently

By taking an active role in the application process, Active Lincs were able to bridge the knowledge gap between partners and Sport England to improve application success rates.

This gave the opportunity to further their own priorities by working collaboratively with partners to consider the long term sustainability of projects across Lincolnshire.

Active Lincs: Learning and sharing Using insight to improve TIF projects of the future.

#### **TIF Case Studies**

"Partners prefer this way of working because we work with them to get the bid through... we then work hard to maintain those relationships for the future."

#### Sport England working differently

Trusting the knowledge and relationships partners have established in their local contexts allowed Sport England to relinquish control.

Empowering Active Lincs strengthened their relationship with Sport England and enabled a creative test and learn approach. Learning together became a more meaningful experience.

#### 2022 Sport England: Extended funding rounds Longer time periods for application and delivery of projects will allow learning to inform progress.

"There's less money now but we can be smarter with what we have learnt."

## Case study: England Netball Walking Back. TIF Award: £9350

**Pre Covid-19: Walking netball groups well established across Lincolnshire** Many women loved playing netball in their younger years. Walking netball is a slower version of the game which encourages anyone to take part regardless of age or fitness.

#### Covid-19: Impact

Walking netball groups became inactive due to the rule of 6, cost of hiring facilities and additional equipment required to meet Government and England Netball guidelines. Participants were at high risk of reduced activity levels during the pandemic and may possibly fail to re-engage with walking netball during the recovery phase.

**Active Lincs** 

EXISTING RELATIONSHIP

**England Netball** 

### TIF Application Target Audience

People with LTHC Disabled people Women and girls Older people

#### Aims

Restart participation within guidelines Increase number of session facilitators Increase membership Provide suitable physical activity and social wellness Avoid risk of group closure

#### Sustainability

History of successful groups promoting physical activity in target groups. Requires kick-start to overcome barriers associated with Covid-19.

## Kick started successful group following COVID-19

## Addressing

inequalities across the county through access to physical activity

Long term sustainability without additional funding

#### **TIF: Impact**

Walking Netball group's financial barriers from Covid-19 guideline removed. New equipment reduced infection risk. Running small groups despite a loss allowed participants to feel safe to return. Unexpected gains have led to long term sustainability and increase in target audience participation.

#### **TIF: Sustainability**

An underspend allowed the 11 new facilitators to be trained and new groups in places such as the East Coast are enabling people from low socioeconomic groups and those with LTHC to participate.

## Case study: BSL Sensory Swimming. TIF Award: £3005

**Pre Covid-19: Inadequate sensory swimming provision for CYP in Lincolnshire** Due to a lack of British Sign Language swimming teachers, individuals who wanted to learn to swim had to access 1:1 lessons at a premium price.

#### Covid-19: Impact With access to leisure centres severely restricted by Covid-19, COVID-19 opportunities for children with sensory impairment to swim were almost nonexistent. **Active Lincs** EXISTING RELATIONSHIP **BID Services Active Nation TIF Application Target Audience** Aims Sustainability Disabled people Individuals with LTHC or disability Developing a service to People with LTHC meet the needs of a participating in physical activity and Children and community often learning a life skill. excluded from the Young People Encouraging long term participation in swimming and mainstream sport. opportunity to learn

Kick started sensory swimming lessons for CYP



Addressing health inequalities across the county through access to physical activity

Long term sustainability without additional funding

### **TIF: Impact**

Combining the experience of BID Services and openminded approach of Active Nation allowed a unique service to be developed. The sensory impairment community trusted the delivery team and engaged fully in the project. TIF funding provided a stepping stone to a sustainable and accessible service.

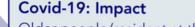
to swim.

#### **TIF: Sustainability**

The success of the class led to its reputation spreading through the sensory impairment community and long term engagement in paid for but affordable swimming lessons.

## Case study: Golf, Tea and Cake. TIF Award: £1175

**Pre Covid-19: Loss of local community hub and provision for older residents** Lack of local amenities and traditional golf club barriers limited older residents access to physical and social activities in local community.



Older people/resident at the Elms had become isolated from the rest of the community during lockdowns.

NEW RELATIONSHIP





COVID-19

#### Target Audience A

Disabled people People with LTHC Women and girls Older people

#### Aims

Develop The Elms golf society Re-engage the golf club with local community Engage residents of the Elms in physical activity Develop women's only golf

#### **Sustainability**

Enable continuation of gold through provision of free social golf membership for Elms residents

Lincoln Golf

The Elms

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Kick started relationships within community



Addressing health inequalities through access to physical activity

Sustainability at risk without active input

#### **TIF: Impact**

Improved connection between community and local golf club resulted in increased engagement with golf and social activities. Increases in physical activity a byproduct of the social gains experienced from participation.

#### **TIF: Sustainability**

Some use of social membership made available to Elms residents but risk of disengagement if the social aspects of the group are not actively maintained.

## Key learning from the Tackling Inequalities Fund

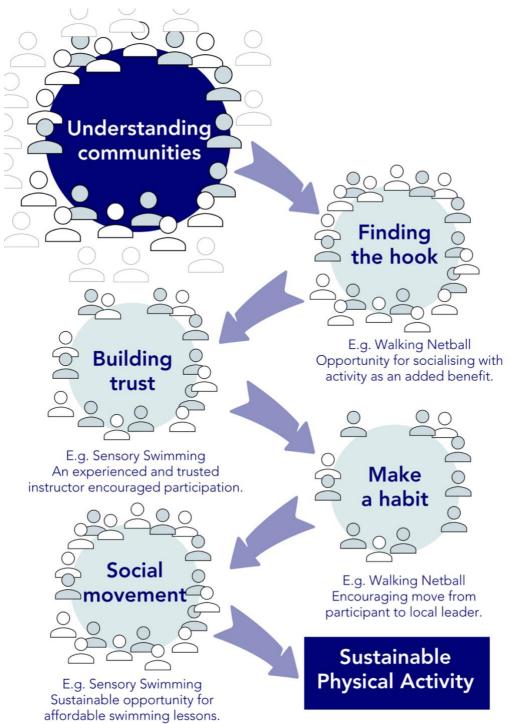
3 key roles to get projects up and running



Active Lincolnshire have successfully distributed the TIF by working collaboratively with partners, both existing and new across Lincolnshire. Key to successful implementation of projects is the development and maintenance of relationships, and recognition that partners can play different but complimentary roles when they work collaboratively to find solutions to tacking health inequalities. When these systems players are present during collaborative working, opportunities arise for a new and innovative projects to emerge that challenge the existing system have potential for sustainable approaches to physical activity.

### Engaging target communities

Although projects can be well planned and implemented, key to their success is engagement of target communities. In all three projects there was engagement and participation and this appeared to be based on a good understanding of the target communities, the ability to find the hook for participation, building trust between the participant and the project, making activity a habit through participation and creating a social movement towards sustainable physical activity.



## Conclusion

By using their unique understanding of the physical activity landscape in Lincolnshire and strong relationships with existing partners, Active Lincolnshire have successfully distributed the TIF. Active Lincolnshire play an important role as System Translators to bring together different parts of the system together and facilitate high quality applications to the TIF which maximises the chance of a sustainable change in physical activity behaviours.

The approach is further complimented by partners who can act as connectors to new parts of the system where Active Lincolnshire may not have explored, and by change agents who are open to a new and collaboratively way of working by breaking down barriers in the system. To continue the successful implementation of TIF projects in the future, Active Lincolnshire need to continue this way of working with their existing partners and identify new partners who may act as system connectors and change agents in the future.

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For more information please contact:

Dr Rebecca O'Connor

info@rocresearchconsultancy.co.uk

www.rocresearchconsultancy.co.uk ROC Research Consultancy Ltd 21 Trevor Road West Bridgford Nottingham NG2 6FS