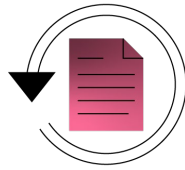


# Your Active Voice

June 2025

# Methodology

## Quantitative Survey

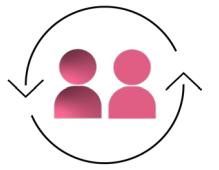


A 15–20-minute survey sent to organisations, clubs, groups and individuals involved in delivering sport & physical activity in Lincolnshire

Target responses: 50

Achieved: **96**

## Qualitative Interviews



Follow up interviews with a sub-sample to:

- Deep dive into specific issues, such as finance, membership, volunteers
- Collect stories & case studies to inspire others in the county

N=**10**

01

**Sample**




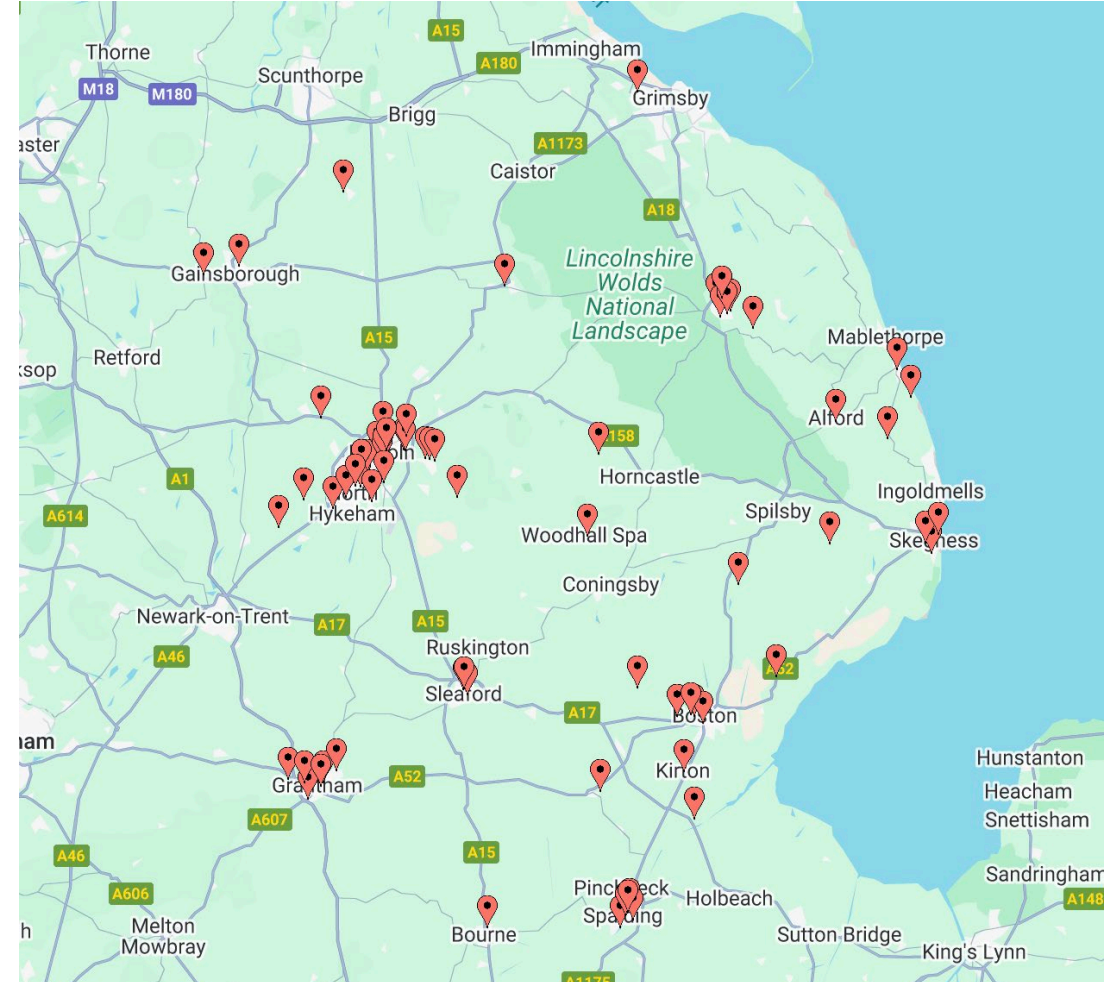
MORE PEOPLE  
MORE ACTIVE  
MORE OFTEN



A map of Lincolnshire divided into its six districts, each color-coded and labeled with the percentage of the population aged 65 and over. The districts and their percentages are: West Lindsey (25%, light blue), East Lindsey (43%, orange), North Kesteven (31%, green), South Kesteven (22%, yellow-green), Boston (27%, purple), and South Holland (27%, dark blue). A small inset for Lincoln shows 42%.

District	Percentage
West Lindsey	25%
East Lindsey	43%
North Kesteven	31%
South Kesteven	22%
Boston	27%
South Holland	27%
Lincoln	42%

 **Craft insight** Your Active Voice – June 2025



### Postcodes of sports and physical activity provision by our respondents.

## Survey respondents cover all types of providers and types of sport/physical activity

Sport/Activity	#	Analysis Group
Multi-sport	23	Multi-sport
Racket Sports	12	Racket Sports
Fitness/Dance/PT	11	Fitness/Dance/PT
Aquatics	10	Aquatics
Martial Arts	9	Martial Arts
Cycling	8	Cycling
Other Active	7	Other Sport/Activity
Netball/Basketball/Volleyball	4	
Athletics	3	
Cricket	2	
Watersports	2	
Rugby/Football	2	
Archery	2	
Triathlon	1	

Organisation	#	Analysis Group
Sports club	36	Sports club
Community group/community activity provider	22	Community group/community activity provider
Sports activity or event provider	9	Sports activity or event provider
Micro-business - e.g. personal trainer	6	Micro-business - e.g. personal trainer
I'm a volunteer that leads activity in my community	4	I'm a volunteer that leads activity in my community
Sports centre or gym - private	4	Sports Centre/Gym
School/college/university	4	School/college/university
Sports centre or gym - public	3	Sports Centre/Gym
Local Authority	1	Other
Private club	1	
Other	2	

02

# Detailed findings



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## Good news in participation rates



40%

“More girls and boys playing football than ever. Walking football growing. We seem to be limited by funding rather than public appetite for our programmes”



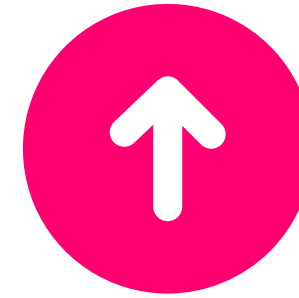
29%



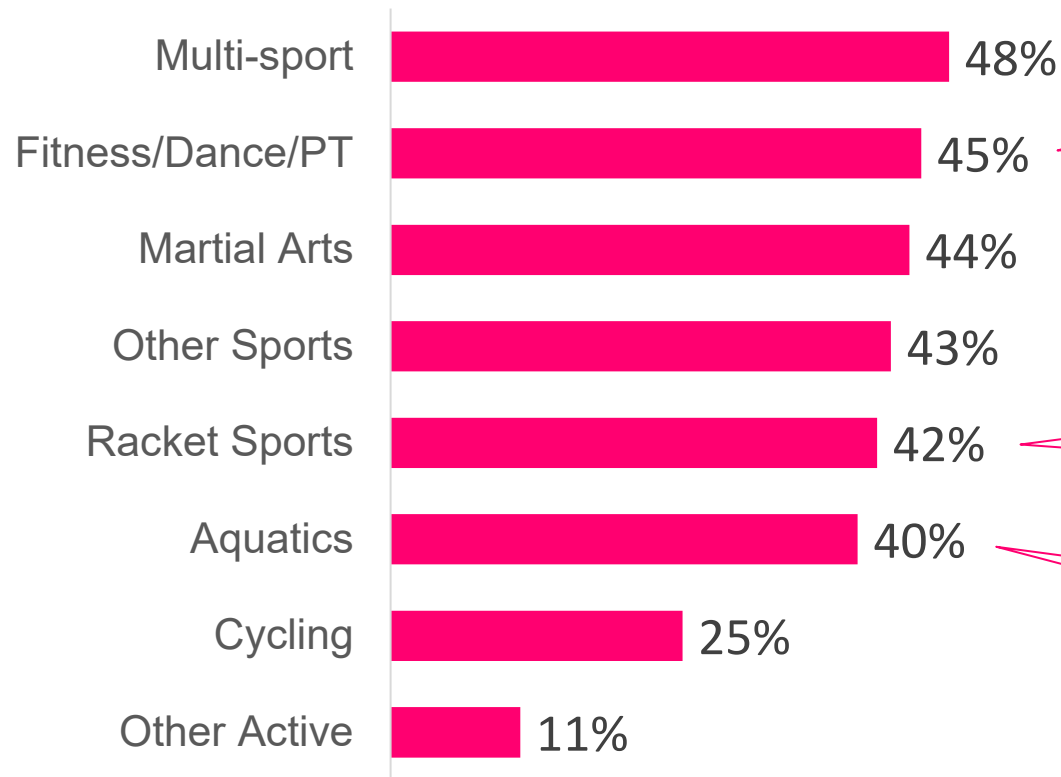
23%

“School pupils are far less committed or prepared to commit to extra curricular activities. The time available and the support of parents seem to be the two biggest barriers”

# 40% of respondents have observed increased participation



% observing an increase in participation by sport/activity



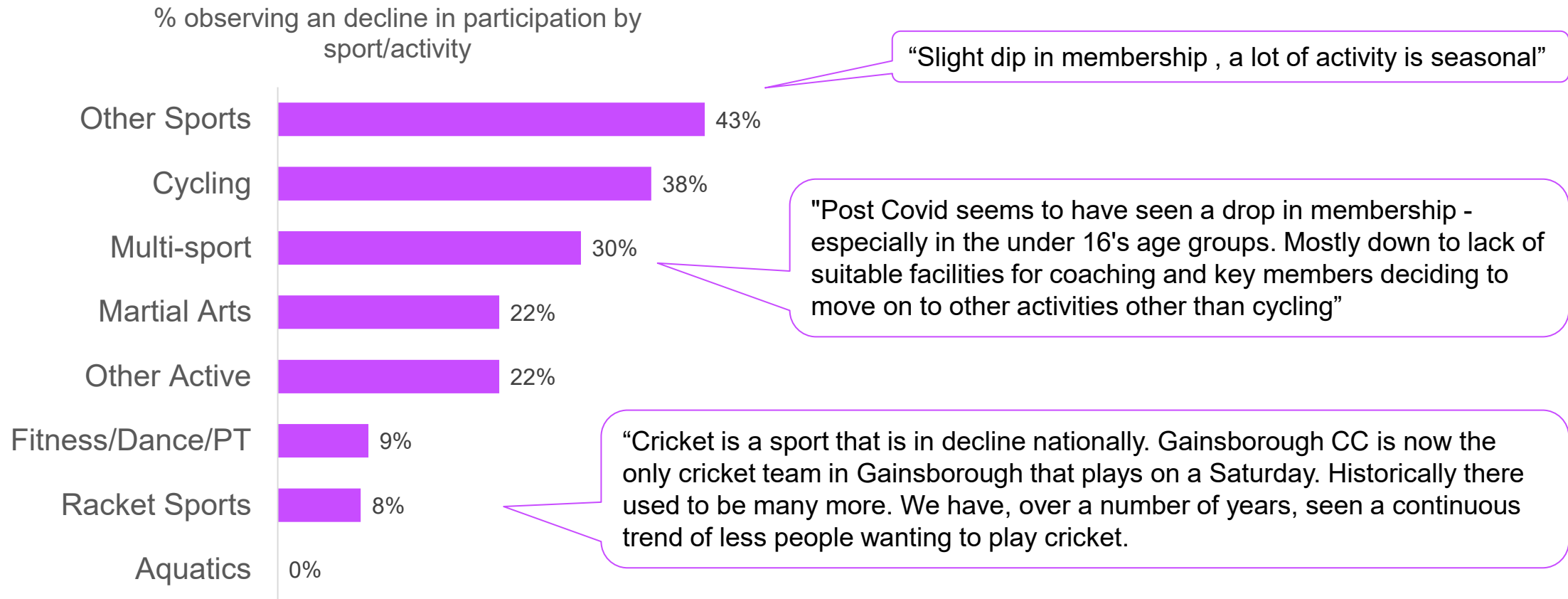
"Pilates is fully booked almost every week, normally I would see a decrease in class numbers come end of Feb but now in April & still going strong."

"More members weekly, great age variety. Table tennis is an inclusive sport, for everyone to enjoy, which it seems that they are."

"As the benefits of dipping in cold water have had an increase in media coverage participation has grown."



# 23% of respondents have observed a decline in participation



03

# You are doing great things!

An in-depth look to the great work Sports & Activity providers are doing  
around the county

MORE PEOPLE  
MORE ACTIVE  
MORE OFTEN

# You are providing opportunities for communities to come together

“ Archery is actually one of the sports in the Muslim faith, so it has spiritual significance for Muslims. So, we're able to grow that area of the sport, which is fantastic. It's also probably **the most inclusive sport I've ever encountered** in terms of I've never met anyone that hasn't been able to shoot in terms of ability.”

“ We have regular events that people attend and support people who wish to do it as single pickers or walkers on the beach. It's making it **fun and social so people make friends and enjoy what they do** as well as just litter picks etc. We have an annual xmas coffee and cake session provided by the local pub.”

“ We've looked at the age range of the people who participate in Fighting Fit... And we just wondered whether, as a test, we might set up a fighting fit session for young cancer survivors... because it's not just the physical activity, **it's the peer support that people get and the social bit of it.**”

“ Over 1,000 people danced with us in 2024, an increase of 25% compared to 2023. Sometimes over 60 participants attend one single event and many have tried our activity for the first time.

A significant number of **friendships have been formed** due to our events. Countywide as well as localised communities have been created because of the **social connectivity of our activity.**”

# Using innovative approaches to engage the population in physical activity

“ JPWS strategically decided the site would become **pedestrian and cycle priority**. As part of a gym session or class our fitness advisors have **advised people walk or cycle to the park as their pre warm up**. Our cycle rack is becoming full!”

“ We have created a bespoke health hub at OneNk for targeted programming (**women and girls, seniors, people with Long Term Health Conditions**) this has proved so successful, we are now going to create the same in Sleaford.”

“ Scotter Tennis Club - pickleball. Diversification into another 'bat and ball' game/sport **that has grown membership.**”

“ ...we've got a run training program to **compensate for lack of pool time** - I've only just started this. Swimmers complete runs and then report their heart rate on WhatsApp groups. We can then see whether the heart rates at the right level, because we're trying to keep the heart rate down and then increase the speed. So the idea is aerobic endurance”

“ Sleaford Tennis Club- Wheelieable Doubles. **Wheelchair user and standing player** in a team against others of the same format. Achieved recognition from BBC Look North and from the LTA for disability tennis.”

# Giving young people the opportunity to build healthy lives

“ We have maintained sessions all across the county providing invaluable sessions and programmes to **young people across Lincolnshire** working with the local police to reduce anti-social behaviour within our areas targeting youths involved in risky behaviour.”

“ The Sport partnership maintains the school sporting infrastructure. School Sport partnerships are England wide, some are far better than others but there is a common aim. **Thousands of pupils undertake activities** in a range of activities on a yearly basis.”

“ I have home-schooled children who are **meeting people of their own age** and really coming out of their shells”

“ I'm finding that a lot of the kids who play football there also do rugby, also do taekwondo, also do cricket, also do swimming, also do cycling. So, there's a lot of crossover, and I think that's a really good thing. I think that's a really positive thing. And I think that's something that all clubs should be encouraging, because whilst we all want to develop excellence in our own sport, we also want to **develop a love of sport and a love of physical activity.**”

“ Attendance to competitions is increasing and we have had **more children compete in county championships** this year. We are also going to be offering girls only swimming in the coming months.”



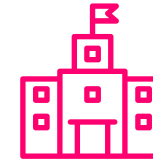
# Initiatives to trial new sports/activities



"As well as hosting multiple open days to **expose new people to our way of coaching**, we are hosting 'Lincolnshire's Most Powerful' (a strongman competition) in September to **give local people a chance to see and participate** in a large community event."



The club "offer[s] one free session for any new player. We are supported by the local sports charity inspire+ and **provide termly taster sessions at local primary schools** and upskill sports apprentices in the sport."



"We regularly have open days where **non-members can participate in all activities** our site offers which are usually well attended. Most recent was a Line Dancing class where we had over 40 attendees with a high level of feedback requesting more of the same."



"Initiatives from Archery GB can include **Start Archery Week**, Project Rimaya, soft archery, partnership working with Help for Heroes, British Blind Sport, The Fletchers, and others."



"We link with the local swimming school and local schools to **advertise trials for entry into the club**. This has led to us always achieving numbers."



"We organise the **annual 'Ride to The Woods' event in association with SKDC**. This is always well attended with the two leaders working non-stop all day. We organise a monthly 'Ride To Belton House' in association with the National Trust."

04

# Challenges and concerns



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# What threatens the future....

**Financial  
challenges**

**69%** agree

“financial sustainability or funding is an issue of concern”

**Volunteers &  
staffing**

**51%** agree

“recruiting & retaining staff or volunteers is of concern”

**Participation &  
inclusion  
challenges**

**42%** agree

“membership is an issue of concern”

**Facility &  
infrastructure  
issues**

**35%** agree

“operational issues are of concern”

## Financial challenges

The most frequently mentioned concern relates to financial pressures, including rising operational costs (especially utilities), difficulty accessing funding, and balancing affordability for participants with sustainable operations.

Many organisations mentioned specific concerns about venue hire costs increasing dramatically due to energy prices.

Respondents also cited a difficulty securing funding through grants, due to lack of experience or volunteer time.

“Financial operation and running costs, very small profit made as **everything is invested back in**”

“Halls are putting their hire fees up to meet the increase in energy costs. Sometimes **I can't keep increasing my fees** to meet the rising costs”

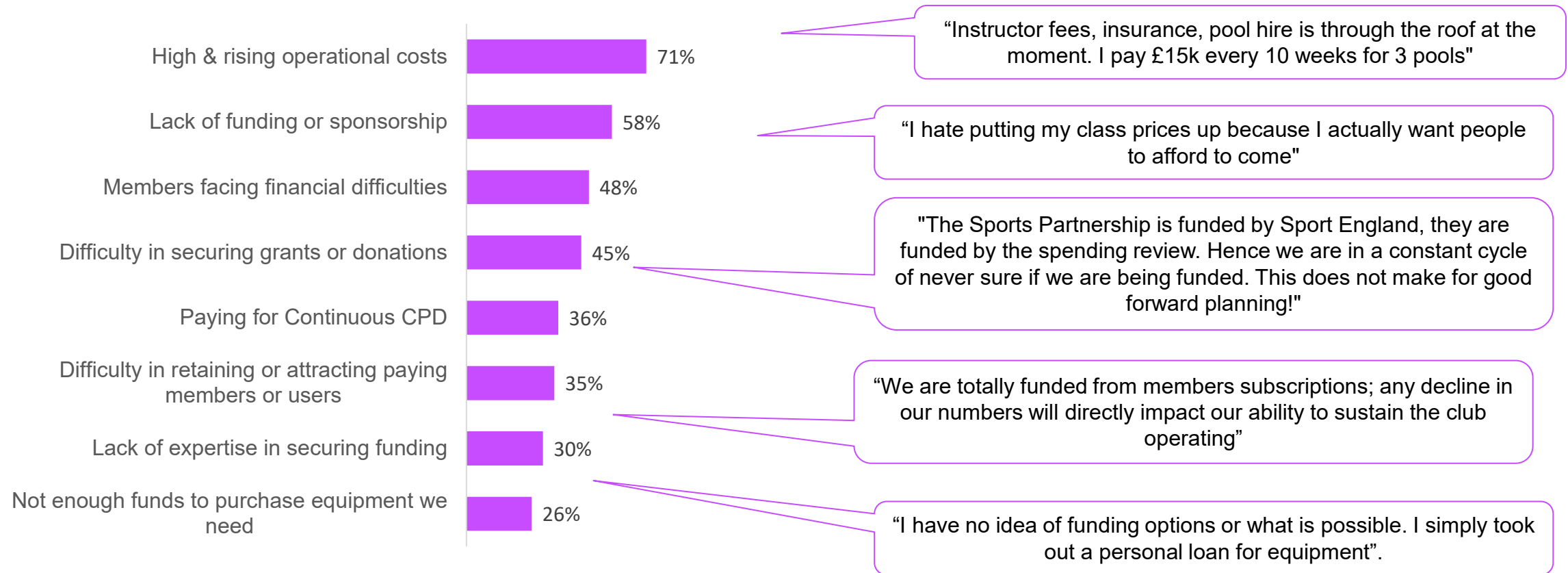
“Increased costs for utilities and staffing. We fear some of our community facilities may be **forced to close**”

“The financial landscape has **never been as difficult as it is now** – it's a perfect storm of financial conditions that everybody's finding difficult. We have **people who are unable to pay** while the facilities [are] having all the same cost increases”

Source: Your Active Voice Survey: “What are the main things that may threaten the future success of your organisation? What are the biggest challenges your organisation is currently facing in delivering sports and physical activity programs?” and follow up interviews N=10

# Financial Sustainability

What are the main financial challenges you have faced





## Volunteers & staffing



Many respondents highlighted difficulties recruiting and retaining volunteers, especially younger workforce. The cost of coaching qualifications and certification requirements were cited as barriers to volunteer participation. Organisations often rely on a small number of individuals taking on multiple roles. Post-COVID, there's been a decline in volunteering with "people leading busier lives" affecting their ability to volunteer and support their children's activities

- “The **lack of individuals who are able to volunteer** or organise an event. The main volunteers are all near retirement age and younger people do not seem to want or able to take on responsibility.”
- “The club is run by a team of volunteers so recruitment is a problem, as **working parents juggle work & home life.**”
- “In need of more instructors but the **local area does not have many qualified or suitable instructors** for what we do and want to achieve”
- “The biggest challenge we have for delivering improved cricket access is volunteer participation due to the wider challenges of the world (**people with less free time due to work, finances and family commitments**)”

# Recruiting & Retaining Staff & Volunteers

## General Volunteer Shortage

Finding qualified coaches with specialised skills is increasingly difficult, particularly in rural areas and for adaptive sports programmes.

Remote locations and poor transportation infrastructure create accessibility challenges for both potential staff and volunteers.

“ Since covid we have had a **drop off of volunteers and hours available** to support the club have been limited”

“ Parents are **struggling for time** as such can't sacrifice anymore to help”

## Coach Recruitment Difficulties

The escalating financial costs and time requirements for obtaining necessary qualifications create significant barriers to volunteer development.

“ The issue of **not having a facility that we can call our home** effects our ability to recruit”

## Training & Qualification Barriers

Organisations are struggling to attract and retain dedicated volunteers, creating an unsustainable burden on the few committed individuals who remain.

“ even if they wanted to coach, the **costs to gain a monitor level 2** (to enable you to coach independently) is so high and time consuming to pass”

“ **Outlay to make a coach** has increased. £600 for level 1; £900 for level 2. Not enough level 2 coaches”

“ Attracting new members; people seem to have a **preconceived notion about exercise classes** being for the fit and thin!!”

“ Recruitment of new members. **Reduced information available about disability sports in general.**”

“ **Inadequate infrastructure for less confident riders.** While they are confident with us leading, they have less of an interest in cycling because it isn't safe.”

“ Accessibility: the park, which is beautiful, has **accessibility issues**. the pathways that people would walk/use the wheelchair on is uneven and there are lots of small edges, ups and down”.



Declining membership, difficulty attracting new participants (particularly younger ones), and competition from other leisure activities were common concerns. Several organisations noted an aging membership base with limited youth engagement.

Physical accessibility limitations, transportation challenges (especially in rural areas), and financial barriers for participants were highlighted. Infrastructure limitations like inadequate changing facilities and poor pathways affect participation.

# Is Membership an issue of concern?

26% -

We have declining membership

"Year on year decline with full racing members who participate in weekly activities. An ageing club, with a lack of youth members".

16% -

Demand but not enough capacity

"Pool time in good quality pools is not available. I would love to have my own facility"

"More people wanting to play just no capacity both with volunteers, coaches and additional training space"

“ We are and have been **reliant on a school** allowing us to use their sports hall for 20 plus years. Therefore, we are quite vulnerable”

“ **Loss of facilities can be a real issue**, as schools and other sites in Lincolnshire have often let local archery clubs know they will no longer be able to use their venues.”

“ **Access to pools and access at a fair price** as we have to use private pools which limits the pools available.”

“ **Maintaining the facilities to a high standard** - financially. Increase in cost of day to day running costs - electricity, gas. Keeping costs down as club prides itself on affordability.”



## Facility & infrastructure issues

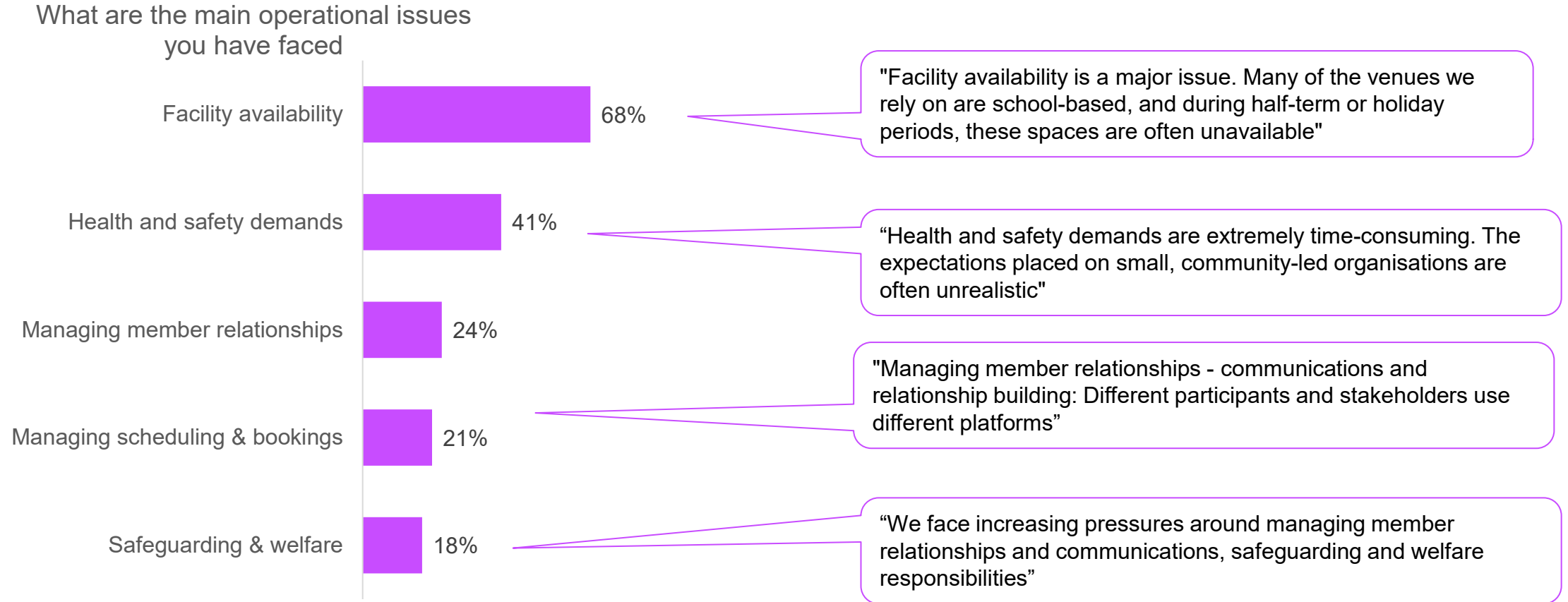
Access to appropriate, affordable, and quality facilities is a major concern. Many organisations rely on school facilities with uncertain availability, face seasonal limitations, or struggle with ageing infrastructure.

For aquatic organisations, pool access and costs are particularly problematic.

Facility access is particularly an issue in Lincolnshire due to many isolated populations, and poor transport.



# Operational Issues

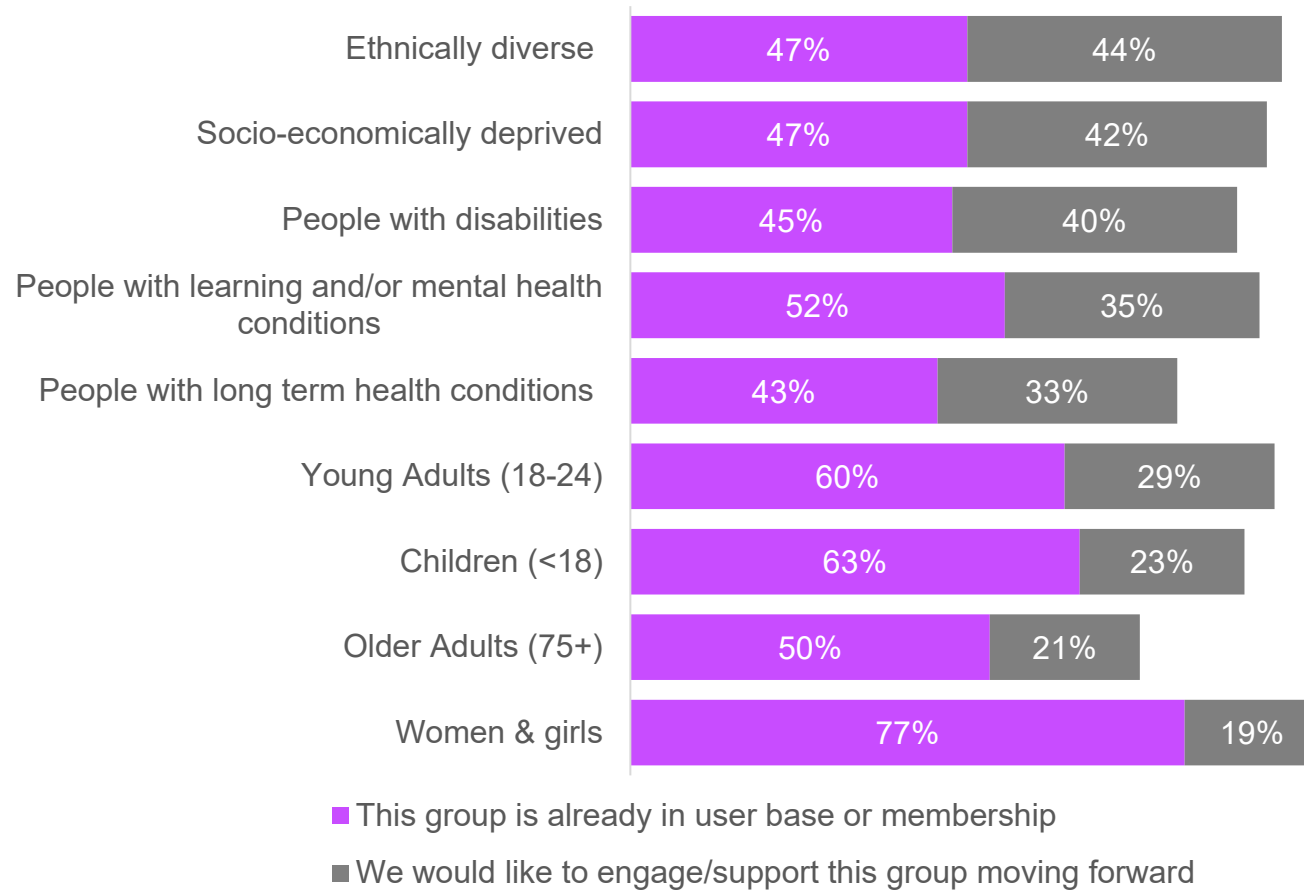


05

**The groups you serve &  
would like to support**

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# The groups you serve & would like to support



“We need support on **how to engage** with the groups, whilst also being able to afford to put on the additional sessions”

“Difficulty in **knowing how to approach youths** and the marketing of any sessions available. Previously coaches went round schools but this became more restricted.”

“Assistance with pinpointing and interacting in the best way with the groups. **It isn't always a given** that you know how to do this.”

# The challenges in supporting these groups

## Capacity and Resource Limitations

"Whilst Swim England has methods of training and competing almost any group we don't have enough lanes in the pool to train more of the outlying groups"

"Funding restraints means we can't support these groups"

## Knowledge Training & Expertise Gaps

"Our committee members are not equipped or trained to help or support in the areas of learning difficulties, disabilities and long term health conditions"

"I currently do not have a specific qualification for coaching of disabled people"

## Community Engagement

"We continue to try to engage more people from the highest areas of deprivation (IMD 1-3) from around the county, who would benefit the most from our support. It can be challenging to get these people to engage in our service"

## Facility & Accessibility Issues

"Our main issue is that there are two flights of stairs to access us, which means we have unfortunately had to turn down enquiries"

"Some of the natural locations of our events are not easily accessible because they are in nature"

# And the support you feel you need

## Financial Resources & Sustainability

Sports clubs urgently need sustainable funding solutions for equipment, facilities, training, and operations to ensure long-term viability and growth.

"Continue being able to **apply for funding to assist** us to meet our charitable aims"

## Skills Development & Specialised Training

Organisations require accessible and affordable training opportunities to equip staff and volunteers with the specialized skills needed to serve diverse populations effectively.

"**Continued CPD and qualifications**, Talks I can be a part of to spread the word. Classes or events I can be a part of."

## Marketing & Community Engagement

Clubs seek support in developing effective outreach strategies and partnerships to increase visibility, attract new members, and build meaningful connections with community stakeholders.

"Having a **range of avenues** to make contact with these groups. We are currently limited to reaching others via social media".

## Access & inclusion Support

Sport providers need practical guidance and resources to remove physical, social, and economic barriers that prevent full participation by underrepresented and diverse community groups.

"Particularly Lincoln Imps sitting club would like to **link to organisations** that deal with individuals with a physical impairment."



06

# Future Support

What you have told us you need to continue your good work

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MORE ACTIVE  
MORE OFTEN

# Collaboration & Knowledge Sharing

There is a desire to create a community of people and organisations who could help each other with common problems.

Many respondents want to establish better connections with schools, health professionals, community groups, and other organisations.

They're seeking collaborative relationships but don't know how to establish them.

"Support with sharing of local contacts, data insight, joint comms and closer collaborative/partnership working to help engage with hard-to-reach communities would help."

"Additional publicity and networking opportunities"



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"We would be happy to run joint sessions with other groups that cater to the above groups but wouldn't be confident in doing this ourselves"

# Financial

Sports clubs need sustainable funding solutions for equipment, facilities, training, and operations to ensure long-term viability and growth.

Volunteers aren't skilled or don't have the time to write bids for grant applications so may miss out on publicly available funding.



"Because we're classed as non-constituted we seem to face a brick wall constantly of trying to get any donations".

"I don't think that our clubs have much experience of applying for funding and grants, and I think possibly they're not always engaged in the kind of projects that would attract grant funding. So that is another reason why they don't spend a lot of their time. And none of our clubs have staff, so they're all volunteer run. So it's also an issue of sometimes this grant application takes a lot of time, and they've only got a set amount of time to run the club, and therefore looking for grants isn't always top priority"



# Marketing & Community Engagement

Organisations need help with:

- Effective advertising, Social media presence
- Reaching specific demographic groups
- Visibility in local press and media
- Wording and messaging for inclusive marketing

"The world of marketing and social media and the algorithms and how we get to people. We haven't really got the money to do all the sponsored advertising."

"It's convincing people to to actually join the club, to want to then to volunteer to become a coach. I think, we need to also have some good PR as well with the council and British Cycling to to say, look, yeah, this is the new facility. This is what we're going to be doing down here, come down and and, you know, do a taster session, a try it out session. So we need that, that marketing there as well to support us in getting it off the ground again."



# Volunteer Recruitment

Organisations need help with:

- Better facilities to attract volunteers.
- Finding and retaining volunteers - many clubs are entirely volunteer-run with no paid staff, making recruitment critical to their survival.
- Training and development opportunities - particularly for specialised roles like coaches and welfare officers.
- Specialised training to support harder to reach groups.

"There's lack of people that are willing to volunteer but you need good facilities to get [volunteers]"

"Training and extra professional support in holding dance sessions for people living with Dementia."



"Cycling coaching courses are not cheap and would be great to see some financial support for coaches to obtain these important qualifications."





# Thank you

Your Active Voice - June 2025

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