

Changing the Physical Activity Landscape Project

**County Durham Sport and
NHS County Durham**

Initial progress report

April 2010

Helmepark Ltd
T: 0191 374 1777
W: www.helmepark.co.uk



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Changing the physical activity landscape project

1. Introduction

The NHS County Durham investment for the Changing the physical activity landscape (CPAL) project targeted at increasing participation in physical activity in County Durham requires robust planning, monitoring and evaluation in order to deliver the expected outcomes. The Theory of change methodology was chosen as it supported the project management team to define shared outcomes, set clear and unambiguous indicators to monitor progress, measure overall achievement and capture the learning to inform service efficiency improvements.

A performance management and evaluation framework has been developed to collect the data and evidence from services, programmes and projects against their agreed performance indicators. The framework will provide County Durham Sport and NHS County Durham with information on each element of the delivery against the investment and project outcomes.

The purpose of this report is to provide the steering group with a snapshot of the progress to date. This should only be seen as an indication of the progress the time of writing, as the continual development and delivery work being driven by the projects means that the level of progress in the programme is constantly changing and some data may have changed

2. Current status of the projects

In January 2010, 23 projects were supported through to stage two of the application process (6 small projects, 12 medium and 5 large projects). The commissioning process provided support to the projects through a series of workshops and face to face support. In adhering to the principles of world class commissioning those projects who were unable to be supported through to stage two were also supported with a series of half day workshops designed to ensure that the projects had the best opportunity to access subsequent funding either through the CPAL or other funding streams.

Of the 23 projects that were encouraged to stage two, the following picture can be drawn:

- 18 projects have had their application approved and funding has been released
- 2 projects are currently pending approval and funding awards
- 3 projects have withdrawn from the CPAL process withdrawn (one small and two medium sized projects)

Of the 18 projects that have successful in securing the funding awards from County Durham Sport (CDS):

- 2 projects are currently delivering activity in the target areas. This has resulted in 100 participants (40-74 year olds and their family members) being recruited to the programme of activity.
- 8 projects are working through the developmental stage in terms of developing partnerships, marketing and communication, training of workforce, staging of taster day sessions to encourage participation and raise awareness of the activity available.
- 5 projects received their funding awards after the evaluation team had completed their initial review. The proposed start for each of these projects is April 2010.
- 3 projects have withdrawn their applications to the CPAL programme.

Those projects that are still pending the funding awards are expected to be signed off no later the 09th April 2010. The deadline is vital if the steering group is to make decisions regarding the level of funding that will be available in the second round of applications to the CPAL project.

A summary of the initial progress can be found in table 1

Table 1

Project Name	Status of the project	Project timescale summary							
		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
Durham AR Club	Approved	22.01							
NHS Darlington Get Cycling	Approved	05 th							
NHS Durham Get Active	Approved	05 th							
Cardi-back PPPT	Approved	08 th		14/15 th					
Nouveau CIC	Approved	17 th	08 th						
Total Tennis	Approved	17 th							
Community Gems	Approved	24 th							
Healthy Horizons North Durham	Approved		01 st						
Derwentside Trust for sport	Approved		05 th	14 th / 15 th					
Tantobie	Approved		06 th		05 th				
Mobex NE	Approved		09 th	10 th					
Durham Wildcats	Approved		15 th						
Peterlee Town Council	Approved		26 th						
Gateshead Thunder	Approved		29 th						
RFU	Approved		29 th						
Community Outreach Programme	Approved		30 th						
DCC Wellness on Wheels	Approved		30 th						
NE Keep Fit Association	Approved		31 st						
Sedgefield 75 Swimming Club	Pending								

Legend

Funding Awarded	
Predicated project start	

3. Evaluation process

It is critical to ensure that the monitoring data is gathered at timely intervals, to allow the evaluation team to report back to the steering group on the progress of individual projects against their own performance management framework and the progress towards the long term outcome of the CPAL project.

Each individual project has been assigned an evaluator from within the HelmePark team to work with them to ensure that the monitoring requirements can be met. Each evaluator will contact their projects prior to the reporting dates outlined in table 2, to arrange specific days and times to meet.

Table 2

Review Meeting (year 1 projects)	Project meeting dates
Initial Review March 2010	22-26 March
3 month Review	2-7 May 2010
6 month review	2-6 Aug 2010
9 month review	1-5 Nov 2010
Annual review	7-11 Feb 2011

4. Interim findings

The initial review discussion with the projects has focused upon gathering data related to the commissioning process and their individual progress to date. Ten projects have been consulted with through the process. Five projects were not contacted during this period as the funding agreements were not in place and therefore it was inappropriate to gather their reflections on the process at that time. We felt it was more appropriate to allow the projects to focus upon completing the operational planning process within the timescales requested.

Due to the slight delay in releasing funding to some projects, many are currently involved in a detail developmental stage of the project. This work will ensure that the projects have a firm base on which to deliver the programme and ensure it success. This element of the delivery will be monitored by the HelmePark evaluation team through the outcome pathway and the performance management tables for devised for each project.

Table 3 captures a headline view of the feedback gathered from the projects that have been successful in gaining a funding award for the CPAL Programme. The focus of the discussions has been on the following themes:

- A review of the initial stages of the commissioning process
- The recruitment processes that the projects are utilising
- The interventions the projects are proposing (timescales)

The findings are presented in bullet point format to represent the views and opinions of the representative we have consulted with.

Table 3

Review of the initial stages

Measure	Summary of findings
How useful were the initial briefing sessions in supporting your application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of projects felt there was a lot of support in place to assist • The feedback was mostly constructive • Very positive and welcoming
How did you find the application form and the guidance document? Were they helpful in supporting your application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application form was thorough (as it had to be), and the guidance form in the main was excellent to refer back to. I do feel there was significant cross over in some sections, which made parts unclear with what we were being told and what the guidance notes suggested. • Process felt slow in parts and at time there appeared to be information missing
<p>Were the workshops that you attended in January helpful in supporting and preparing you for stage 2 (small/medium only)</p> <p>What changes would you make?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – this clarified the majority of issues that each bid obviously had, especially with the different sizes of organisations present. • The links developed at this meeting were excellent, one project reports that they are in touch with at least three other bids projects whom they believe they will have ongoing links with throughout CPAL • One project reported that they arrived at the workshop unclear as to the purpose and were surprised to find that they had been successful – they felt that they meant they didn't fully get out of the workshop what they wanted as they were unprepared. • Message that the medium projects had taken from the workshop was the need to focus on the CVD risk group – projects felt they had addressed this change which was reversed on feedback on the operational plan
<p>How helpful has the following been?</p> <p>Feedback provided after initial application</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both HelmePark and CPAL were always approachable making it possible for us to work through each section to be as informative as possible. • Talking through requirements is easier than emails • Individual 1:2:1 meetings that were offered later through the process were very useful in speeding up the process • Timescales were reported by 5 projects to be very tight. This has provided a mixed response with others reporting that they were manageable • It was felt that the feedback should have been linked more closely with the operational plan – difficulties for some projects in aligning the feedback against the scoring system with the relevant sections in the operational plan
Operational planning guidance and support - CDS and Sign-off process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process has been valuable for those organisations with a more business focus as it has supported a review of practice and policy • Some elements of the operational plan were unclear and appeared to duplicate the initial application form in parts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A majority of the projects have reported that they have found the operational planning process 'difficult'. Reasons include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unclear that projects were going to have to complete operational plans and this should have been made clear prior to/ in initial application information ▪ Unclear what level of information and detail was required ▪ Clarity on how the outcomes pathway and PMF were included in the plan ▪ Clarity on who required what information and the timescale it was required by ▪ Three projects reported they felt that at times it was a process driven agenda, with the process being more important than moving the project forward in a flexible way to suit the type and nature of the projects completing the application – should be some difference in level of detail between small – large • CDS have responded quickly to questions and information requests – some answers however have confused the projects in terms of clarity around what information was required • One project reported that they felt it was a complicated process that kept changing with additional information requests
Outcome planning and PMF support - HelmePark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges with the changes of project staff and leads has led to confusion over requirements for the pathway and PMF • Clarity required on the link between the outcome pathway, the performance table and the operational plan • Pleased with the KPI's supplied to make it easier to know which measurements to use in conjunction with our own • Projects have appreciated 1:2:1 support
Do you have any suggestions to improve the process for the next funding round?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity on what is and isn't fundable – what are PCT looking for to help potentially narrow the scope • Mixed messages for the briefing sessions need to be addressed – Clarity required on what is required, the full process and level of detail etc • Increased support for smaller projects • Clear and stricter timescale known upfront – vague at the briefing on the deadline for operational plan submission. A clear timescale was then introduced later.

The recruitment process

Measure	Summary of findings
How were the participants identified for the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material being placed in locations such as GP surgeries, local shops/community halls leisure centres. • GP exercise referral pathways have been highlighted as the main source of recruitment for the CVD target group • The project that has exceeded their recruitment targets reported that they have identified and recruited participants by building on existing programmes of activity being delivered – using the timetables to understand what was happening and then attended each of activities to generate contact with potential participants face to face.
What partnerships / relationships have you been able to develop / are targeting to support the recruitment process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All projects have developed links to the respective CSN leads for their delivery location • The NHS Get Active team have organised and delivered a Launch event at the beginning of March to engage the projects delivering in Easington Area (13 new project/partners) • Individual contact with GP practices is being utilised by some projects – this has raised concerns over the development of such relationships. • Relations and links have been made with community venues and physical activity programmes to support recruitment and marketing. • Relationships between the projects has started to emerge which will enhance delivery for both – especially addressing the sustainability of opportunities for people to engage in physical activity
How were the participants engaged in the programme? What methods did you use to recruit people?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP exercise referral pathways have been highlighted as the main source of recruitment for the CVD target group • The use of taster sessions has been acknowledge as a means of engaging the target audience in the activities provided by the projects • Marketing of the sessions has mainly taken the form of posters and leaflets placed within the community settings • Word of mouth and providing a presence in local community venues have proved very fruitful for one project who has reported exceeding recruitment targets within the first 6 weeks of delivery • Marketing material – banner stands, leaflets, posters, e-flyers, presentations to local business networks

Intervention delivery

Measure	Summary of findings
When are the activities due to start / When did they start?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please see Table 2 for individual project outlines• Expectations on the delivery start dates has caused some issues – demand to start in April has significantly reduced development time and has implications when projects need to work with other partners to recruit participants• Majority of projects are reporting taster days / pilot events in mid to late April with activities beginning in May / June• The medium and large projects are undergoing a period of recruitment to support the capacity of the organisations to deliver the project.• A number of new posts / extension to current posts (activity co-ordinator and delivery posts) have been created via the CPAL funding route (7 projects reported undergoing a recruitment phase)

5. Feedback from unsupported stage 1 projects

As well as undertaking a review with those projects that were successful in gaining funding awards, CDS and HelmePark have been involved in delivering a series of workshops for those projects that were not supported after stage 1.

The focus of these workshops were to enable the applicants to gather further feedback on the commissioning process, develop their knowledge of the assessment process and gain clarity on what the panel were looking for in the applications. The purpose of the workshop was to support the applicants with any future applications to the CPAL process and increase the opportunity for them to be successful. 16 project representatives accessed the workshop and reported that they found the process very useful and would have liked to have seen the workshop delivered prior to submission as they felt that it would have supported their knowledge and understanding on what was required by the panel.

Twinned with this, the workshops allowed HelmePark and CDS to gather feedback on the commissioning process, which will prove invaluable in ensuring the process is refined for the next funding round.

A number of issues emerged, in some cases which are a direct contrast to the experience of those projects that were successful. With regard to the initial briefing sessions, the workshop highlighted that applicants felt that they were given very mixed messages regarding what the CPAL programme was looking for in terms of type of activities that would be considered and the scale of the project bids. Some delegates felt that they had been encouraged in one direction and this had hindered the chance of success as the 'goalposts' were then moved. Applicants reported that the message from the workshop suggested that 'all projects would be supported'. It appears that this was misinterpreted and led some applicants to believe all applications would receive some level of funding. Whilst it appears to be a limited occurrence, it highlights the need for the communication to be clear and consistent.

In addition, it was felt that had the briefing been linked to the guidance notes this would have been helpful in developing the applications. On the whole they reported that the briefings were generic and positive in their approach.

Other issues that were raised within the workshops were that:

- Criteria and scoring was weighted too heavily to experience and this could limit applications
- Application form should have been set against the scoring criteria
- Timescales were too tight and not enough time was given to develop projects and ideas
- Working with the CSN was viewed positively however an issue emerged where applicants felt they were not getting appropriate support where the CSN was also leading on an application for funding

6. Additional feedback from those projects that were successful in stage 2

6.1 The projects were asked to provide feedback on any challenges or barriers that they felt were needed to be addressed to support the successful delivery of the CPAL project. The projects reported the following issues:

- Concerns have been raised regarding the accuracy of data received from local surgeries regarding BMI and BP readings – All reported that CVD risk was calculated over the telephone
- GP surgeries were vague and knew only limited information about the CPAL project and the CVD pathway – this has implications for recruiting the target group
- Reliance of some of the smaller projects on other larger projects to support recruitment
- Mixed messages being received by projects over the role of other partners especially linked to recruiting the target group, accessing GP practices and importance of health checks.

- Projects report that in some cases communication with CDS has proved difficult – expectations were not clear
- Recruitment issues – linked to partnership develop / roles and responsibilities of partners.
- Health Check process and CVD pathway infrastructure not in place as yet and this will make referrals very difficult.

6.2 The projects were asked to provide feedback on any further support they may need in delivering their projects. The projects reported the following issues:

- Awareness raising with GP's via CDS / strategic manager to support referral to projects within the CPAL.
- Marketing and awareness raising of the CPAL project – high level campaign to promote the funding, physical activity opportunities that are available and promote the CPAL brand. Projects feel that this is vital in supporting their recruitment getting people to recognise the scheme.
- Need support around the CVD pathway – higher involvement should be sought to get the referral pathway set up – development of the infrastructure
- Continuing the links with CPAL/CDS and HelmePark is crucial as we start implementing the intervention, projects have reported that they do not want to feel that they are being left alone to “crack on” just because they (HelmePark and CDS) know what we are going to do
- Guidance from CPAL and HelmePark for the application stages for amateur clubs etc could be a little more “hands on”.
- Recognise the difference between voluntary and business groups - differentiate approach
- Businesses potentially see the importance of their own projects and it appears to be far easier to be thorough and patient, and complete the process to the end – Project quote ‘As a member of a local amateur club, however, I could see the challenges being faced by others, and perhaps simplifying what is expected could cut down the frustration of the application process. The forms no doubt need to remain as they are, but the ability to engage with the organisers is crucial’.
- Data on number of people with elevated CVD risk across the county – support identification of participants
- Two projects (one currently delivering and the other starting in one week) have requested guidance on whether they can apply for additional funding – This has been raised as the demand is higher than first envisaged. and both are reporting that they may be able to fill and run more programs quicker than expected, one project has reported exceeding whole project recruitment targets within first 2 months of delivery

7. Resolving the challenges

In response to these findings, the CPAL management team have undertaken a number of actions aimed at resolving issues raised by the initial comments from the evaluators.

Action 1: Awareness of GP's / strategic awareness of the project

An important issue raised by the projects and partners from the initial stage of the CPAL funding highlighted the need to ensure that there was an increased awareness level of health professionals, partners and other agencies of the projects commissioned within the CPAL project. It was felt that this was vital in supporting projects to engage participants from the referral pathways to projects and activities. In response, County Durham Sport (CDS) have proposed the delivery of a CPAL networking session to widen project and partner awareness of the wider CPAL funded work.

The areas outlined above, will be addressed through the evaluation framework developed in the initial planning stages of programme. The framework provides detail against the following outcomes; *Practitioners and professionals understand the purpose and long term outcome of the project* and *GP Practices refer appropriate patients*. *Practitioners and professionals understand the purpose and long term outcome of the project* refers to GPs, Practice Managers, Health Trainers and Physical Activity providers in the geographical areas where the target group is located being aware and understanding the purpose and long term outcome of the project. *Practices refer appropriate patients* refers to Health practitioners knowing the projects that are available through CPAL and referring patients

appropriately. Actions and timescales have already been detailed to ensure the successful completion of these outcomes.

In addition a joint marketing strategy for the CPAL project has been proposed and agreed between NHS County Durham and County Durham Sport. It was felt that a high level campaign to promote the funding, the physical activity opportunities available and the CPAL brand was important particularly with regard to supporting projects in their recruitment and developing a more generalised awareness campaign to help more people to recognise the scheme.

Action 2: Timescales in phase 2

With regard to the timescales in phase one, the management team have worked to put into place a clear and detailed timeline for phase two. This timeline clearly detailed the timescales and deadlines for each stage in the commissioning process. In responding to the suggestions raised during the initial evaluation, potential applicants will have a specified period of time to develop and work up any applications ahead of the submission date. This has been extended to support the development of the relevant networks and partnership required to deliver a project successfully.

Table 4 details the commissioning timescales for phase two of the CPAL project

Table 4 Commissioning timescales

Stage	Small & Medium projects	Large projects
Pre application briefings	14 th and 15 th April 2010	
Release of commissioning documentation	Week commencing 20 th April 2010	
Submission of application	Noon, Thursday 01 st July 2010	Noon, Thursday 12 th July 2010
First stage assessment and selection process	05 th – 21 st July 2010	17 th August – 01 st September 2010
Project feedback and operational planning guidance provided	22 nd July – 03 rd August 2010	02 nd - 07 th September 2010
Operational planning workshops / meetings	04 th and 05 th August 2010	09 th and 10 th September 2010
First draft operational plan submission deadline	Noon, 26 th August 2010	Noon, 30 th September 2010
Draft plan clarification meetings	07 th – 14 th September 2010	11 th – 13 th September 2010
Project sign off deadlines	30 th September 2010	28 th October 2010
Project start up and development	01 October 2010	01 November 2010
Project delivery expected	Mid November 2010	Early January 2010
Project completion date (latest)	September 2012	

Action 3: Documentation

The documentation provided for applicants in phase one has been adjusted to reflect a need for more information to be passed to potential applicants in the initial stages. The application form, guidance information and the operational plan required in stage two have been aligned to ensure that the information required at each stage builds into a comprehensive planning document without duplication or contradictions. Through this it is hoped that potential applicants will have clear guidance and an awareness of the requirements for CPAL funding at each stage.

Action 4: Format and structure of the phase 2 briefing sessions

Briefing sessions have been changed to reflect an emphasis on the process applicants will be expected to go through. Detailed information will be provided to potential applicants on:

- The outcomes and priorities for this phase of CPAL funding.
- What is meant by the CPAL target groups and the NHS risk register and access to relevant data.
- The timescales and deadlines associated with phase 2.
- The support available from HelmePark, Community Sport Networks (CSN) and the Physical Activity Strategic Manager to successful projects.
- The scoring criteria and expectations of the selection panel.