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Breaking Boundaries

Final Evaluation Report

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List of abbreviations

CCC	Connecting Communities through Cricket
CLF	Community Leadership Forums
SE	Sporting Equals
Spirit	Spirit of 2012
YLCT	Youth Led Change Team
YST	Youth Sport Trust

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Executive Summary

About Breaking Boundaries

As a social cohesion programme, Breaking Boundaries primary aim was to bring young people, their families, and communities together through activities and one-off events based around a 'cricket-themed' approach. This sought to improve community cohesion in Barking and Dagenham, Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester, and Slough between 2018 and 2022.

Originally funded by £1.8 million from Spirit of 2012 for three years (2018-2021), through its Connecting Communities through Cricket grant, this was extended due to COVID-19. Spirit initiated the grant funding to connect communities through cricket to deliver social cohesion outcomes and the Youth Sport Trust (YST) (as Strategic Lead), supported by Sporting Equals were selected through a competitive process to deliver the programme.

This summary reports on a process and outcome evaluation that was undertaken by Wavehill and has run alongside the programme delivery that concluded in November 2022.

What were the challenges facing these areas?

Themes across the five areas highlighted the following key challenges and needs around social cohesion that Breaking Boundaries sought to address such that:

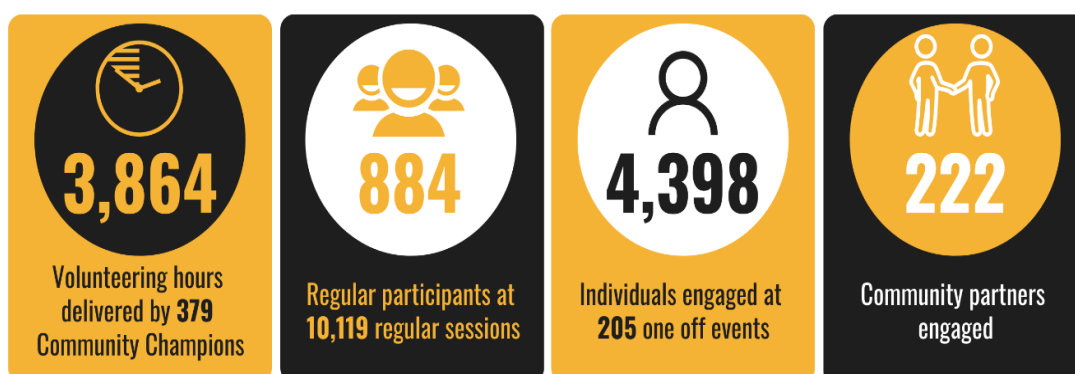
- Communities were living 'parallel lives' but not engaging with each other even though they might be living in very close proximity to each other;
- In some areas, significant ongoing and recent changes in the ethnic make-up of targeted communities meant groups had not had many opportunities to engage with each other, or there were circumstances where communities had resisted moves toward integration;
- Some areas were dominated by Ethnically Diverse Communities¹ made up of 2nd and 3rd generation migrants rather than those who had more recently arrived. However, these groups tended to remain focussed on engagement within their communities rather than outside of it and therefore these cities sought ways of bringing more 'settled' communities together.

Ongoing review work was needed by City teams to monitor change in these issues and emerging needs so the programme could maintain a local relevance to its delivery.

¹ This term replaces Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic to avoid generic labelling of communities that does not reflect important issues of ethnicity, geography, and nationality. See [Sporting Equals | Terminology](#) Statement.

Who took part in Breaking Boundaries?

Between 2018 and 2022, Breaking Boundaries achieved the following engagement and delivery:



Primarily due to COVID-19, the programme missed its output targets, but as agreed by the programme board the final 12 months of the programme focused upon more targeted activities. This was to deliver a deeper qualitative experience for participants to identify learning on best practice in improving community cohesion by bringing communities together through physical activity with a cricket theme.

Across those Breaking Boundaries areas it has worked with it has had success recruiting Champions and participants from ethnically diverse communities. 83% of registered participants and 78% of Community Champions were from Ethnically Diverse Communities² far above the 15% in England. It also had success recruiting participants and Champions from Pakistani, Indian and Black groups.

What did Breaking Boundaries achieve?

The programme aimed to contribute to improvements across six key outcome areas. Against these outcomes, performance has been varied with the programme able to demonstrate strength in its delivery around improved social connectedness, empowerment, community voice and participation and belonging, and cohesion knowledge and skills of delivery staff.

It has made the greatest strides in improved partnership working bringing together partners through its work who had not previously worked together or were specifically addressing past tensions between themselves or communities. This overcame a lack of readiness and infrastructure in the cities to support cohesion work.

Greater progress was made in the final months of delivery as the programme flexed its delivery approach to undertake more targeted and deeper work with a narrower number of partners and community groups. In turn, this has fostered some of the positive progress seen in connectedness and community participation.

² This term replaces Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic to avoid generic labelling of communities that does not reflect important issues of ethnicity, geography, and nationality. See [Sporting Equals | Terminology](#) Statement.

Improved social connectedness and attitudes to diversity

Breaking Boundaries has sought to foster improved social connectedness and attitudes to diversity by deliberately facilitating social mixing between community groups through the activities it ran. This developed shared group ethos around exploring differences and commonalities between groups which meant the groups brought together developed better understanding of each other. The targeted work since the programme's return from COVID-19 has seen progress in this area because it has through co-produced approaches deepened connection between a smaller number of groups such that they highlighted improved understanding of others in evaluation interview.

Examples of improved social connectedness and attitudes to diversity

Faith Centre and Forums: Examples in Barking and Dagenham and Manchester show the value of using different faith centres as the host locations for programme activities to encourage participants to meet and understand different perspectives on the lives of others. Activities taking place as part of these events also encourage social mixing facilitated by discussions around different religion's perspectives on key local issues.

Quality connections over quantity: The targeted working in Slough with Roma and Pakistani young people demonstrates that well facilitated connection opportunities achieve a stronger quality of connection between participants. This also works most strongly when building social mixing into existing activities rather than creating new ones which is co-produced with the participants involved facilitated by Community Champions. This was also seen in the joint work between Families Against Violence and Claremount Youth in Manchester that enabled them to see the real commonalities in their lived experience in the areas the programme was working in.

Increased empowerment and community voice

By focussing cohesion discussions on specific local issues the programme was able to empower participants and Champions to have a greater voice in their local communities and develop their own solutions to these issues. By encouraging 'safe' group environments Breaking Boundaries was able to facilitate the sharing of challenges between groups, and the City Leadership Forums (CLFs) also acted as safe forums in which groups could discuss and co-produce solutions to situations many felt they had not had agency over before.

Examples of increased empowerment and community voice

Empowering: In Birmingham a Female Empowerment event developed through Breaking Boundaries initiated consultation with underrepresented young women in physical activity in the city area. Bringing together female participants from different schools led to the development of new multi-sport activities with those they had not met before.

Creating safe spaces: In Slough and Birmingham, Breaking Boundaries activities enabled previously reticent participants to share views and experiences with others including other family members to enable their participation in programme and other community activities. This enabled different groups to come together and begin conversations about issues in their communities and saw them have a voice, often for the first time.

Greater community participation and sense of belonging

Breaking Boundaries created new opportunities for community participation through its delivery and participants and Champions alike highlighted how this had increased their participation with others from their community. From this a stronger sense of belonging has been fostered for some participants, but particularly Champions, with this being most strongly seen in activities involving visits to faith centres and other activities that sought to ensure participants had a stronger sense of the festivals, traditions, and issues faced by other communities. This had success where it deliberately sought to tackle the 'parallel lives' of the groups it was working with.

Examples of increased community participation and sense of belonging

- Weekly wellbeing walks, talks with occasional cricket teas between Asian and White British women and the Bhangra Blaze activities in Birmingham.
- Multi-faith cricket tournament and intergenerational dance sessions fostering engagement and facilitated conversations in Bradford.
- Weekly multi-sports and school session mixing young people from Asian and Afro-Caribbean groups to also discuss their lived experience in Manchester.
- A state v. public school cricket tournament and local community partnership family funday tackling parallel lived experience in Slough.

"I think it's just feeling accepted and welcomed and being part of the community. A few years ago, I did Bollywood dancing, I loved the community aspect, it got rid of the isolation I was feeling. This is very similar; it brightens up my day." **(Female, Dance Participant, Barking)**

Stronger partnership working

Breaking Boundaries achieved strong outcomes against this measure particularly in the last months of the programme through the CLF work and the community development work undertaken by cities. Two-hundred and twenty-two partners were worked with including a range of organisations and community groups operating outside of the physical activity arena. Engaged local partners suggested that the programme's key strength was the links with other organisations and community projects that have been developed through the most recent work through the CLFs that led to independent working between paired community organisations.

Examples of stronger partnership working

Working with partners outside physical activity: Slough's work with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) had taken several years to establish but had been brokered through Breaking Boundaries with a shared focus on developing a stronger sense of belonging for young people involved with the YOT. In Birmingham building on previous partner links developed a new project in limited time bringing together the White British community with refugees who were occupying multiple hotels in the targeted area through work with the Living Well Consortium and George Dixon School. This led to an initial programme of eight sessions of multi-sports activities and cohesion discussions that linked the White British pupils at the school with Arab and European young people in the temporary accommodation provided by the Cobden Hotel.

Building connection: In Manchester, the Breaking Boundaries team engaged all community organisation leads to come together monthly for social cricket themed get togethers. Each get together involved a cricket themed activity, lunch, and an opportunity for organisations to share their views on the programme. The get togethers provide an opportunity for organisations to connect better with each other and increase attitudes to diversity by learning about other cultures and religions.

Increased wellbeing

Wellbeing outcomes were less strong although Breaking Boundaries did bring improved confidence, socialisation (tackling social isolation), and related mental health benefits arising from engagement with, and participation in the activities it provided. Champions saw positive changes for themselves with all Wellbeing areas improving and with increases in life satisfaction and happiness, whilst their Anxiety levels also fell. This perhaps reflects the greater level of programme engagement Champions had through the training and the wider range of activities they were involved in.

Examples of increased wellbeing

Intergenerational activity: In Slough the Ujala Foundation has been helped by Breaking Boundaries to secure a wide range of materials, e.g. sewing machines and art supplies, and recruit a fitness instructor to offer the women heavily subsidised exercise classes (£1 per person per session). Women who attend the sessions identify they have helped them with social isolation and loneliness because it has brought them into contact with other women they wouldn't have otherwise engaged with.

Bolly Bhangra in Birmingham facilitated mixing between women from different South Asian ethnic groups, to tackle underlying tensions between different groups of South Asian women from Bangladeshi, Gujarati, and Pakistani backgrounds. There was evidence not only of improved confidence in the women, but the wellbeing benefits that come with it. The leader reported the activity also supported the mental health of participants that had worsened during COVID-19 lockdowns.

Enhanced knowledge and skills to support community cohesion

Breaking Boundaries has improved the knowledge and skills of local people and organisations to enable them to effectively support community cohesion. In particular, Breaking Boundaries highlighted the importance for organisations to link effectively with local community organisations to reach community groups, individuals gained knowledge on how to effectively bring different groups of people together, and local groups learnt how to effectively use sport and physical activity as a vehicle to support cohesion outcomes.

Examples of improved knowledge and skills to support community cohesion

Qualifications: All the five original Coordinators passed an apprenticeship qualification showing that they had demonstrated improved knowledge and skills around supporting community cohesion. Coordinators were also able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the pursuit of other similar employment³ illustrating how their training through Breaking Boundaries and experiences on the programme improved their employability.

Community Leadership Forums (CLFs): In Birmingham, Breaking Boundaries worked with a local organisation, the Feast, who has developed expertise in promoting cohesion between young people of different faiths and cultures in their communities. The Feast provided training at the Breaking Boundaries City Leadership Forum to provide insight in the way delivery staff could facilitate conversations between young people from different backgrounds and reflect on conversations that could lead to future positive outcomes.

Changing roles and responsibilities: In Manchester, city team staff highlighted how their understanding of communities and community development focus had been enhanced by their programme experiences to extend sports development work to include greater community development elements. In Bradford, Community Champions undertook more volunteering and were able to become part time youth workers because of their Breaking Boundaries experiences. Teams acknowledged the need to get local cohesion teams (where available) on board early to help drive delivery forwards.

What is the Breaking Boundaries legacy?

Key elements of legacy included changed working approaches around activity development which have a greater focus on community development approaches than traditional sports development work and greater input in decision making from young people. Other examples of legacy are:

³ This included three Coordinators moving on to manage another physical activity programme, work for the local authority, or in roles associated with community engagement for the NHS.

Legacy examples

- In Birmingham community partners have been linked to volunteering opportunities at Edgbaston stadium as a way of ensuring continued engagement of Community Champions.
- In Manchester, access to holiday programme opportunities has been brokered for community partners leading to three new organisations being added to the holiday programme roster.
- In Slough, learning from Breaking Boundaries was used to support the drafting of the first specific sport and physical activity cohesion strategy.
- All the original Coordinators achieved their Apprenticeship qualification building skills and knowledge to improve community cohesion in their future work. Four have moved onto new jobs working with the NHS or other community partners.

There remain opportunities that could be fostered by local cohesion teams to continue to use programme Champions but also to develop further connections with the range of community expertise that Breaking Boundaries has been able to draw upon.

What are the main conclusions of the evaluation of Breaking Boundaries?

Breaking Boundaries has not only succeeded in breaking down the boundaries between communities it has broken new ground in many other ways. There is now clearly great potential to build upon, and replicate, this work and learning that has come from it to benefit cohesion and integration work and activities across the country. Breaking Boundaries has clearly changed the lives of the individuals it has involved as well as supporting the changing of attitudes and behaviours of the communities it has worked with.

Positive experiences for participants through the social mixing facilitated by programme activities have brought benefits in social connectedness, community participation and voice, and partnership development with organisations and individuals being brought together for the first time and in most cases then developing new activities through that link up.

Other outcomes have proved more challenging – attitudes to diversity, increased empowerment, and improved wellbeing around life satisfaction and whether life is worthwhile but there are some positive signs of progress being made.

Breaking Boundaries' focus on socialisation, play and coaching, participation, spectating, and volunteering based around a 'cricket-themed' approach has helped its work around cohesion, in particular the targeted approaches in the final period of programme delivery. This has aligned the programme more closely to the original intentions of the Connecting Communities through Cricket grant that funded the programme and has resulted in improved performance in its last months of operation.

The programme did face significant barriers (including COVID-19) and for the success of the project to be more easily replicated, lessons must be learned, and new approaches adopted in the future.

What is the key learning to emerge from Breaking Boundaries?

Programme delivery learning highlighted these lessons for future cohesion projects:

- **Time must be taken before starting a scheme to develop a fuller understanding of each community and the cohesion issues it faces.** This is far more likely to be successfully achieved by a process of co-creation and wide engagement, especially with young people;
- **Infrastructure to facilitate regular contact and discussions between targeted community organisations to identify needs and approaches is especially valuable to support programme development and delivery.** Community and area leadership forums can be especially useful in this context;
- **Workforce development on cohesion and integration is essential for all partners, before the scheme starts, but also as it develops;**
- **Evaluation is essential and needs to be based on outcomes – to show how peoples' lived experiences are impacted by programme activities.** This should be set up before programme delivery begins;
- **The quality of interaction between individuals and communities who are different, is far more important than quantity.** The value of one-off events and other superficial engagement and inflexible delivery approaches must be challenged;
- **Local control of some funding decisions to support projects addressing local needs is a key way to build links and trust with targeted communities.** Monitoring of such arrangements should be proportionate to the funds involved;
- **Sustainability and legacy should be built into every scheme from the start.** Although, other models may be possible, Breaking Boundaries had success through the creation of community champions, skills development and building long term change in community partnerships. All schemes need to develop a similar approach.

The full report also outlines more specific lessons for local and national policy makers and physical activity and community partners.

1. Introduction and Context

Summary

This chapter provides a summary of the background for the programme drawing on national policy, and original rationale for the programme. It highlights a timeline of delivery and changes that occurred to this during its lifetime providing a programme that sought to bring communities together through a ‘cricket-themed’ approach to community cohesion improvement in five city locations across England – Barking and Dagenham, Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester, and Slough. It concludes by providing an overview of the mixed method evaluation approach that assessed the extent to which its aims and outcomes were achieved. This report is supported by standalone appendices providing more technical detail on its findings, a series of 24 standalone case studies, and three annual reports.

1.1 Breaking Boundaries

The Breaking Boundaries programme came through a grant opportunity created by Spirit of 2012 in 2018 called Connecting Communities through Cricket (CCC). This opportunity was developed by Spirit to improve social cohesion and wellbeing at a community level through funding activities that would use cricket as a vehicle to connect different communities and increase interaction between individuals and communities to achieve this. The opportunity as detailed in the original CCC information pack identified its expectations that a funded programme would:

- Grow inclusive participation in cricket as a sport;
- Offer a range of volunteering opportunities;
- Provide opportunities for social mixing through hubs supporting young people and their families;
- Enable young people aged 14-25 years old to engage in funded activities that supported their education, improved employability, and personal development.

The grant opportunity also sought to use the spark of the 2019 Men’s World Cup and success of the Women’s World Cup team in 2017, to make the most of cricket’s potential to bring different ethnic and faith communities closer together and foster mutual respect and friendships through work with local communities and their representatives.

In responding to this opportunity, the Youth Sport Trust, and Sporting Equals were awarded the grant through a competitive process for their jointly developed Breaking Boundaries programme. Its primary aim was to bring young people, their families, and communities together through regular engagement in activities and one-off events focused on socialisation, play and coaching, participation, spectating, and volunteering based around a ‘cricket-themed’ approach. This sought to encourage participants to engage in physical activity and sport to improve community cohesion in its targeted locations: Barking and Dagenham (in London), Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester, and Slough.

The need for the programme of the form Breaking Boundaries took had been identified by the Youth Sport Trust through initial consultations during its development. This identified a range of local community challenges involving the separation of community groups with members not engaging with their near neighbours from community groups different to them or their friends.

This living ‘parallel lives’ meant groups did not understand or appreciate commonality between them which often led to rising tensions between communities contributing to increased extremism in those areas. Breaking Boundaries was intended to pilot approaches to bring communities together in the five selected city area to begin to address such tensions by bringing groups together and contribute to more cohesive communities.

Breaking Boundaries was funded by £1.8 million by Spirit of 2012 that was originally due to run for three years (2018-2021). This delivery was extended to November 2022 after the programme’s delivery was formally suspended between March 2020 and June 2021 due to the UK Government’s restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Delivery by Breaking Boundaries resumed in September 2021⁴, although this continued to be restricted until November 2021 by differences in the appetite of participants and community groups and facilities to engage in activities/delivery post COVID-19.⁵

Table 1.1 overleaf shows detail of the five Breaking Boundaries City locations, the areas they were targeting, and their local delivery focus.

⁴ Community Coordinators resumed their roles from the 1st June 2022.

⁵ Further detail on these can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

Table 1.1: Overview of the Five City Delivery Locations

City	Delivery Focus	Target Wards	Focus Groups
Barking and Dagenham Host: Barking and Dagenham Council	Delivery for young people aimed to join community groups across cultures and languages to improve community cohesion, and improve the education and employability of young people, enhance family health and wellbeing, and celebrate different cultures through cricket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayesbrook • Abbey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White British; East European; South Asian; and Black African-Caribbean • Women • Girls • Inclusion • Young People and their Families • Health and Wellbeing
Birmingham Host: Edgbaston Foundation	The project aimed to develop a community hub around Edgbaston cricket ground and other local settings to engage local community groups in cross-community engagement through cricket activities and other community events/festivals. Delivery focussed on personal development for young people, tackling exclusion from activities poverty/deprivation, and through this improve community cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edgbaston • Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East • Balsall Heath West 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White British; South Asian; and Black African • Young People • Deprived and Affluent • Inter-generational working • Women • Girls • Inclusion
Bradford Host: Bradford Council	The project aimed to develop the sense of local identity for targeted community groups. It sought to address lack of integration between these groups by tackling language barriers through a focus on cricket. The project aimed to reduce prejudice, negative attitudes of others, and promote friendships between groups. It aimed to create a safe environment for those in the community to feel confident to engage/interact with people of all backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Horton • Little Horton • Bowling and Barkerend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Asian; Black African; White British; Eastern European; and Travellers • Young People • Inclusion • Women • Girls

City	Delivery Focus	Target Wards	Focus Groups
Manchester Host: MCRAActive	<p>Young people/local partners used cricket to engage/unite people from different backgrounds/faiths/communities and support them to come together to increase tolerance, shared values and commonality. Cricket was used to promote social cohesion by bringing together people who had not previously engaged collectively. The project aimed to be a vehicle for a wider partnership to influence change/create opportunities for different backgrounds/cultures to mix, share time together and increase social cohesion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moss Side • Whalley Range 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young People • Inter-Generational • Women • Girls
Slough Host: Slough Borough Council	<p>The project aimed to deliver a range of fully inclusive opportunities for different communities/ages/genders/disabilities to enjoy cricket and develop social cohesion through coming together through a range of cricket activities and community events/festivals for those who are new to cricket</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chalvey • Baylis and Stoke • Wexham • Britwell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Asian; Eastern European; Somali; and Roma • Young People and their Families • Health and Wellbeing • Women • Girls

1.1.1 Programme Management

The Youth Sport Trust (YST) was the Strategic Lead and accountable partner for Breaking Boundaries. Sporting Equals (SE) was responsible for supporting each of the five city locations at a local level and led the programme's marketing and communications activity.

Delivery was overseen by a project board and undertaken through four tiers involving host organisations, Community Coordinators and Champions, local partner organisations and ambassadors. Further detail on the specifics of the components of the delivery model can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

1.2 Evaluation Method

There were two main elements to the mixed method evaluation of Breaking Boundaries.

The first element, a **process evaluation**, assessed whether the design and delivery of the programme produced the expected outputs and outcomes to support ongoing programme delivery identifying key lessons learnt to support future community cohesion work by the programme. The second element, an **outcome evaluation**, identified whether the intended outcomes of the programme had been delivered and whether sustainable differences were observable amongst the local communities worked with.

The evaluation has adopted a mixed method approach underpinned by a programme evaluation framework ⁶ involving interviews and data collection with programme participants, those delivering it, stakeholders, and partners. It is supported by secondary data collection and analysis using official datasets, programme monitoring data, and quarterly reports supplied by Cities. The table below provides an overview summary of those completed for the evaluation work. Further detail can be found in [Appendix 5](#).

Table 1.2: Summary of evaluation tasks completed

Research Task	Description
Community Coordinators	Baseline telephone survey completed prior to coordinator joining the programme to track general demographics and measures on cohesion, skills and wellbeing, this took place with Coordinators. Coordinators were followed up at the end of their engagement with the programme
Community Champions	Baseline online survey as they joined the City Leadership event. Follow up telephone surveys did not take place in Year 2 because the Champions undertook extremely limited delivery on the programme but were scheduled three to four months after first engagement

⁶ This can be reviewed in the Breaking Boundaries Baseline Report (2018).

Research Task	Description
Regular Participants⁷	Initial registration form completed by participants when joining a regular activity and follow up telephone interview with them soon after joining to collect a more detailed baseline position from them. A post participation survey was undertaken by telephone, six to nine months after taking part
Partners and Stakeholders including City Teams	Qualitative telephone interviews were undertaken on an annual basis with contacts supplied by local City Teams highlighting organisations they had worked with across the programme
Case Studies	Case studies were produced to highlight key aspects and learning from delivery throughout programme delivery and agreed with the evaluation team at YST

⁷ This refers to participants in activities run by Breaking Boundaries that are due to last for six sessions or more.

2. Programme Delivery and Reach

Summary

This chapter highlights the final reach figures for the programme drawn from management information. These highlight that Breaking Boundaries between 2018 and 2022 has:

- Recruited and trained **379 Champions** contributing **3,864 volunteer hours** to programme delivery;
- Engaged **4,398 individuals** in **205 one-off events**;
- Had **884 regular participants** taking part in **10,119 regular sessions**;
- City teams worked with **222 different partners**.

The chapter further details the demographic profile of Champions and participants.

2.1 Programme Reach

The pausing of programme delivery as highlighted above has impacted the reach the programme has been able to achieve, and the 2nd Annual Evaluation Report had highlighted that the delivery momentum Breaking Boundaries was building. Cities were confident of being able to reach their targets which was undermined by the pandemic.

The full resumption of programme activity delivery in November 2021 has shown programme reach to be extended in working with a greater variety of community groups than before lockdown shaped by:

- More targeted working with smaller numbers of community groups identified through local community mapping in each city area;
- A retained focus on a cricket theme to activity delivery providing more multi-sport opportunities rather than just cricket only activities;
- An emphasis on the quality of participant experience rather than on just attaining high numbers of participants.

The final reach figures for the programme drawn from management information⁸ show that it has involved:

- Recruitment and training of **379 Champions** (original target: 525) who contributed **3,864 volunteer hours** to programme delivery;

⁸ This included quarterly monitoring reports collated by each City and Wavehill and data drawn from an online registration system for Community Champions and for regular participants.

- Engagement of **4,398 individuals** (original target 5,000, was revised post-pandemic to 2,000) in **205 one off events** (including festivals, community events, and cricket events – this included online activities as programme activity resumed). These events were used extensively in the early stages of the programme to raise awareness and recruit participants to regular activities;
- Programme participation by **884 regular participants** (activities run by Breaking Boundaries that involve six or more sessions – original target 3,000) taking part in **10,119 regular sessions**;
- City teams worked with **222 different partners** including a range of grassroots community organisations.

Summaries of City delivery can be found at [Appendix 3](#).

Participant levels have been clearly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic restricting delivery well into mid to late 2022, and the focus on smaller more targeted work was sensible. Furthermore, in discussions around the return to delivery, the Project Board accepted that in the final stages of delivery Breaking Boundaries could attain greater impact and reach through more targeted smaller scale activities. Therefore, the delivery approach changed to focus on bringing a stronger qualitative experience for participants that sought to start a journey towards greater cohesion, rather than purely focussing on hitting key performance indicators (KPIs) related to engagement figures.

2.2 Profile of Champions and Participants

2.2.1 Community Champions

Community Champions⁹ were required to complete an online registration survey as part of their training session. Detailed profile data shown in Table 2.1 overleaf is based on data from 379 community champions¹⁰ highlights the following key features of this group.

These profile statistics show that the programme has done well to recruit Champions from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds with the majority drawn from Ethnically Diverse Communities. However, it is notable that this is heavily weighted towards those of Pakistani ethnic background. This has been a consistent feature of Champion profiles that has not radically altered despite Cities being asked to target other groups. In other areas the demography of the Champions reflects wider demographic patterns in England, whilst the young age profile shows the programme has been successful at targeting young people.

⁹ More detail on the Champion role can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

¹⁰ The 379 was shared across each area as follows: Barking and Dagenham, 65; Birmingham, 58; Bradford, 98; Manchester, 66; and Slough, 92.

Table 2.1: Key demographics of Champions

	All Champions	Interesting Features
Gender	54% Male 44% Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Champions were female dominated in Barking (53% Female) and Slough (54%)
Age¹¹	Average age: 17	Birmingham average age: 15 Bradford: 19 years
Disability	21% had a disability or long-term health condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barking Champions (25%) were most likely to have a disability, Slough the least (16%). England – 23.5% have a disability
Ethnicity	78% were from an Ethnically Diverse Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12% of Champions were White British Manchester (89%) and Barking (72%) having the highest and lowest proportions respectively of their Champions from an Ethnically Diverse Communities. In England 15% of the resident population is from Ethnically Diverse Communities 51% of Champions were from an Asian/Asian British background rising to 70% in Bradford and 59% in Slough In Manchester 48% of Champions were Black African/Caribbean 65% of all Champions of Asian/Asian British origin were Pakistani and 22% were Indian 72% of Champions from Black African/Caribbean groups were Black African
Religion	60% were of a Muslim faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% had a Christian faith and 8% had no faith
English as a second language	18% had English as a second language	

Source: Community Champion Online Registration System

¹¹ It is worth noting that 90 Champions did not wish to indicate their age. This reflected wider patterns of concern amongst young people particularly about how information they were supplying in the management information system might be used and therefore their reticence about completing data requests.

2.2.2 Participants

Participant profile data is drawn from an online registration system that all regular participants were requested to complete on joining the Breaking Boundaries regular activity. It collected data on demographics of participants and acted as the sampling frame for more detailed baseline interviews with a random sample of participants. Subject to their consent, these individuals would then be followed up to track the impact of their Breaking Boundaries participation on them (see Chapter 1).

Detailed data from the online registration system identifies that the key demographics of the 884 registered participants¹² were, as shown in Table 2.2. This shows the programme has done well to draw in a wide range from Ethnically Diverse Communities demonstrating great potential for active social mixing amongst participants. Most are from the youngest age groups being aged under 25 whilst disability is broadly in line with national averages. It also illustrates that the profile of Champions has affected this pattern with some groups attracting similar participants to them.

Table 2.2: Key demographics of regular participants

	All Participants	Interesting Features
Gender	56% Male 44% Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participants were female dominated in Birmingham (54% Female) and Slough (51%)
Age	41% were aged 8-14, 69% aged 25 or under	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Barking (90% of participants aged 25 or under), Manchester (81%) and Bradford (75%) worked 8–14-year oldsBirmingham participants were the most likely to be older with 46% of participants aged 26 or over, and 42% in Slough. This reflects the delivery of more recreational forms of activity through the programme including dance and yoga activities
Disability	15% had a disability or long-term health condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Slough (25%) and Birmingham (17%) had highest proportion of participants with a disability, Barking the lowest (7%)In England 23.5% of residents have a disability

¹² It's worth noting that many participants did not complete the online registration form so this may be an underestimate of the total number of individuals who took part in regular Breaking Boundaries activities.

	All Participants	Interesting Features
Ethnicity	83% were from Ethnically Diverse Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17% of participants were White British • Birmingham (94%) and Manchester (93%) had the highest proportion from Ethnically Diverse Communities • In England 15% of the resident population are from Ethnically Diverse Communities • 68% were from an Asian/Asian British background rising to 80% in Bradford and 76% in Barking • Manchester 26% came from Black African/Caribbean groups • 62% of all participants of Asian/Asian British origin were Pakistani, 23% were Indian, mirroring the Champion profile • 76% of Champions from Black African/Caribbean groups were Black African
Religion	49% were of a Muslim faith	

Source: Regular Participants Online Registration System

3. Outcomes

Summary

This chapter identifies the findings against the cohesion outcomes the programme, in agreement with Spirit, was seeking to attain improved social connectedness and attitudes to diversity; increased empowerment and community voice; increased community participation and sense of belonging; improved partnership working; improved wellbeing; and improved knowledge and skills to support community cohesion.

It shows that with a few limited examples that the programme has made recent progress in the final months through targeting smaller areas/groups and focussing on key issues relevant to those groups with 'pockets' of success noted around social connectedness, community participation, and partnership working. These have occurred because of targeting by city teams underpinned by an emphasis upon facilitated social mixing in the activities that have been undertaken. It also reflects work with local authority cohesion teams to engage them in sport and to see the value this can bring to tackling cohesion issues. Weaker examples lack similar targeting and mean that activity, rather than cohesion enhancement, is the primary delivery outcome or focus.

3.1 Cohesion Outcomes

Delivery through Breaking Boundaries was focussed specifically on ways in which the programme could enhance community cohesion in the five targeted City areas and some specific wards within them in line with the original CCC grant requirements. The definition of cohesion that Breaking Boundaries was working towards drew on LGA Guidance published in 2002, results of the 2016 Casey Review and the Government's Integrated Communities Strategy green paper published in March 2018.

This highlighted eight dimensions critical to this kind of work which were further incorporated in the Spirit funded report by Belong in August 2020 '[The Power of Sport: Guidance on strengthening cohesion and integration through sport](#)', which highlighted further insight on supporting short term outcomes that can demonstrate progress towards improved cohesion.

These represent areas where Breaking Boundaries can target impact and as later sections will show did become a focus of the programme's delivery, particularly in its post COVID-19 delivery. Further detail on the background to the definition of cohesion Breaking Boundaries was working towards can be found in Section [6](#).

In terms of assessing the impact of the Breaking Boundaries programme on improvements in community cohesion, the areas agreed with Spirit included:

- Improved social connectedness and attitudes to diversity.
- Increased empowerment and community voice
- Increased community participation and sense of belonging
- Improved partnership working
- Improved wellbeing
- Improved knowledge and skills to support community cohesion.

3.1.1 Improved social connectedness and attitudes to diversity

Social connectedness and its development between participants have been an explicit focus in all areas since the programme's return from COVID-19. This has meant that projects have sought to identify through the City Leadership Forums¹³ the best ways to co-produce with partners how targeted community groups will be best brought together. Typically, from June 2021, City teams were seeking to bring two to three different community groups together through a range of activities that would then be taken forward (see [Appendix 7](#) for details of these).

Within these activities, there were deliberate approaches to facilitate mixing between groups that had not previously come together. They had short term success with the social mixing within the project. This meant that 'paired' groups had been connecting those that local intelligence and insight had highlighted as being a focus of key cohesion challenges in targeted areas.

Encouraged by previous evaluation findings and the programme management team, cities thought more readily about local community challenges where cohesion issues needed addressing and how it could be facilitated through links they established with community groups. This has then been translated into specific activities to increase social connectedness through facilitated social mixing.

The best examples illustrate how this is used to underpin the development of a shared group ethos so that the participants work together to explore difference and commonalities to build connection between previously disparate groups.

Through this they have a better understanding of each other and develop better attitudes to diversity as a result. The fact it was being brokered through trusted community organisations was also key, because these groups were trusted by participants. Breaking Boundaries further contribution came from bringing together community groups who had not previously known/trusted the new groups they were now working with.

¹³ Details on the running of the forums can be found in Chapter 4.

This contrasted with the earliest stages of Breaking Boundaries delivery where City teams often tended to lead on this because they felt it was part of their key tasks to develop the activity. As connections with participants were less trusting this meant attendance and engagement was often poorer meaning that any reason to attend was limited because participants trust those organising it less.

In these weaker examples in most pre-pandemic programme delivery, this curtailed the ability of City staff to facilitate social mixing, groups failed to fully mix, and did not develop a shared codesigned group ethos. Thus the activity is less able to connect groups or facilitate improved attitudes to diversity.

In these cases, any reason for participants to attend is thus only about the activity on offer rather than the cohesion outcomes it seeks to achieve. Session design in the first 18 months of delivery did not clearly embed delivery on cohesion outcomes with these early designs and approaches assuming that cohesion outcomes would occur just by having groups in the same space/room as each other.

Consequently, without a continual focus on connecting groups has affected the ability of individuals to 'connect' with the programme and other participants. In some cases this seems to be linked to the greater engagement of local authority cohesion teams, and additional support from community groups like The Feast in Birmingham (as highlighted below). An approach that had been actively advocated by YST and Sporting Equals through their programme management work.

Delivery example

The Feast began operating in Birmingham in 2000, and work to bring together teenagers from different faiths and cultures to build friendships, explore faith and change lives. They have developed expertise in promoting cohesion between young people of different faiths and cultures in their communities. They provided training at the Breaking Boundaries City Leadership Forum in Birmingham providing insight in the way delivery staff could facilitate conversations between young people from different backgrounds and reflect on conversations that could lead to positive outcomes in the future.

Since the return from the pandemic in November 2021, a more focussed approach facilitated by the specialist cohesion input enabled better understanding of need and opportunity for co-produced approaches which helped avoid some of the early (pre-pandemic) delivery mistakes of trying to be 'all things to all people'. There is though, limited evidence on how this will be sustained beyond Breaking Boundaries now the funding is ended. However, there is a clear role here for local cohesion or community development teams to foster this work going forwards.

Evidence from City team, partner, and participant interviews show that attitudes to diversity had remained a challenging area to influence throughout programme delivery though there was some evidence that change is occurring and being sustained.

There are some signs that for participants¹⁴ they did see some changed attitudes towards others different to them with 54% saying this had got better (19% saying this had got a lot better) from their Breaking Boundaries experience. For Champions, all of 35 interviewed felt other people's attitudes in their local area to diversity had changed through their Breaking Boundaries experiences.

Some participants commented during interviews that the best aspect of their Breaking Boundaries experience was improved understanding of the circumstances, and celebration of, different communities but 46% of participants who were interviewed by the project said these attitudes had not changed by the project despite them valuing the contact they had had with others:

"I think I enjoyed listening to other people's stories. People talking about their own experiences, their backgrounds which was part of the activity."
(Female Cricket Participant, Birmingham)

"It was nice to make new friends and to find out a different way of life."
(Female Exercise Class participant, Slough)

"I look forward to meeting different people, with a stressful job and life, at least once a week it's nice to meet people and have some fun for a few hours." **(Male, Badminton project participant, Manchester)**

This highlights the fact that other external influences could be having an impact with other family members, peers or friends outweighing the influence of Breaking Boundaries. It is also likely that some Breaking Boundaries delivery may not have been long enough in duration, or provide enough opportunities, to change attitudes.

¹⁴ N=125

Other examples of programme outcomes in this area include:

Examples of improved social connectedness and attitudes to diversity

Faith Centre and Forums: Examples in Barking and Dagenham and Manchester show the value of using different faith centres as the host locations for programme activities to encourage participants to meet and understand different perspectives on the lives of others. Activities taking place as part of these events also encourage social mixing facilitated by discussions around different religion's perspectives on key local issues.

Quality connections over quantity: The targeted working in Slough with Roma and Pakistani young people demonstrates that well facilitated connection opportunities achieve a stronger quality of connection between participants. This also works most strongly when building social mixing into existing activities rather than creating new ones which is co-produced with the participants involved facilitated by Community Champions. This was also seen in the joint work between Families Against Violence and Clarendon Youth in Manchester that enabled them to see the real commonalities in their lived experience in the areas the programme was working in.

Further opportunities to increase social connectedness and improve attitudes to diversity

Impacts in this area could be extended by:

- Increased emphasis in early programme implementation and delivery on targeted groups being brought together to **co-produce approaches to social mixing** to improve connectedness and attitudes to diversity and agreeing group rules;
- **Greater use of facilitated conversation approaches** through 'coffee morning' style interactions between participants facilitated by Breaking Boundaries prompt cards;
- Identify ways with targeted groups to **extend new invites to additional community groups** as group ethos and engagement develops;
- Facilitating sessions to actively broker and foster participants to **develop continued connection** outside of the programme to help sustain the connections and changed behaviour;
- **Improving understanding of how attitudes to diversity can best be demonstrated** and what practically can be done to foster changed attitudes around diversity will help to demonstrate this further.

Further details on the specific approaches here can be found in [Appendix 8](#).

3.1.2 Increased empowerment and community voice

There were examples of this outcome area demonstrated across interviews and the reviewed project reports. A strong theme on this measure was on addressing challenges around the 'parallel lives' of targeted groups – living alongside each other yet not interacting with other community groups. However, it is important to note that the activities coming out of the CLFs¹⁵ have created opportunities for community participation that have not existed before.

¹⁵ Commentary on the effectiveness of the CLFs can be found in Chapter 4.

Some projects have done just this by focussing on a specific local issue – littering, anti-social behaviour – where potential participants have felt powerless to engage with as a way forward. Focussing cohesion discussions on such issues can help the groups build their own solutions to the issue when they might have felt unable to before. This helps those groups to build a common goal and creates commonality between groups.

For instance, in Slough a Homeless agency linked up with Aik Saath young volunteers in partnership working with Slough Outreach, AWBS International Women’s Club and Breaking Boundaries Community Champions. This provided Christmas meals for local people experiencing homelessness through a relationship established through the physical activity set up by Breaking Boundaries that these participants had previously been involved in. This led to the group being supported in its development by an Activation grant from Breaking Boundaries. It shows good links to programme’s common cause objective in the vision of Breaking Boundaries.

Delivery Example – Female Empowerment, Birmingham

Birmingham wanted to identify ways in which they could bring more female participants into programme delivery. It was a cohesion issue because consultation work identified that women felt isolated and removed from their community with limited engagement in some of the community developments and activities in the area. They sought first to bring girls together to help initiate consultation with them to identify ways young females could be better involved in Breaking Boundaries. This brought together young females from different schools and different ethnicity groups to feel more socially connected with each other. The delivery took place initially through a Female Empowerment Event leading into regular multi-sport activity groups provided through Breaking Boundaries delivery. The girls present were able to speak with others who they would not ordinarily associate and start connections that could be developed through future planned work together.

There were also examples of empowerment of individuals engaged by the programme:

“It was seeing a group of children of diverse backgrounds coming out and doing something collectively. It shows if we put our energy and we dedicated ourselves to it, we can make a difference and that was the biggest impact for me, realising we can do something.” **(Parent of Participant, Bradford)**

“There's a lot of Asian communities here and a lot of Somalian communities so it is breaking down boundaries and it's for us women to go out there who are restricted due to child commitments, due to social and economy kind of pressures but this was one hour free of charge...where I can bring the kids and play cricket with them in a safe environment without being judged and also having the opportunity to meet other people as well, like-minded people.” **(Female, Cricket Participant, Birmingham)**

There is some limited evidence that progress around empowerment is starting to be demonstrated with City interviewees identifying that the decision of participants to attend and help to shape sessions were examples of this outcome especially where participants have been reticent to take part or have been absent from activities in the past. Furthermore, project leads and participants highlighted how ‘safe’ group environments also encouraged the sharing of challenges and issues supporting the identification of further activities or projects that could address them. Thus, creating these ‘safe spaces’ participants could be empowered to raise issues they might not otherwise have done.

“JJ, a female Hijab wearing young Black person and Community Champion delivered a speech at LETGIRLSPLAY event in which she gave her story and gave realistic ways of creating conversations with parents from young girls around participation in sport. She said she wrote a letter to her Dad and explained everything whilst offering a compromise to complete a Degree, this worked and she is now a sponsored referee with big goals. As she was speaking to a group of girls from different ethnic backgrounds you could see heads turning and looking at each other to show a real interest in how JJ story could be similar to theirs and how to overcome that situation.” **(Community Coordinator, Slough)**

However, empowerment around community cohesion issues was more limited which a Coordinator highlighted was because the development of empowerment around such issues “takes time and requires a lot of support to build confidence for some groups to engage and take forward”.

The CLFs also highlighted a range of practice where forum participants were making contributions to those meetings that were then shaping discussions around activity because this had been discussed during their Breaking Boundaries engagement initiated by conversations at the CLF. There is scope for this to be extended though by looking at ways this could move beyond Breaking Boundaries delivery to other work happening outside the programme.

Other examples of outcomes in this area include:

Examples of increased empowerment and community voice

Empowering: In Birmingham a Female Empowerment event developed through Breaking Boundaries initiated consultation with underrepresented young women in physical activity in the city area. Bringing together female participants from different schools led to the development of new multi-sport activities with those they had not met before.

Creating safe spaces: In Slough and Birmingham, Breaking Boundaries activities enabled previously reticent participants to share views and experiences with others including other family members to enable their participation in programme and other community activities. This enabled different groups to come together and begin conversations about issues in their communities and saw them have a voice, often for the first time.

Opportunities to increase empowerment and community voice outcomes

Further development of this outcome area is possible with it including:

- **Facilitating co-production¹⁶ work** around ways of empowering and extending community voice, perhaps including specialist training around effective community consultation approaches;
- **Developing focussed activities around specific common cause issues** identified through the co-production work above;
- **More intensive and longer (in time) engagement with participants** targeted on specific cohesion outcomes Facilitating the groups **building more opportunities for day-to-day contact** between groups outside Breaking Boundaries activities with training input around safe and appropriate use of social media and other digital technologies.

Further specific details on these can be found in [Appendix 8](#).

3.1.3 Increased community participation and sense of belonging

This is an area again where interview examples are highlighted within Breaking Boundaries delivery but have yet to be extended into comparable outcomes beyond the programme. Although new community participation opportunities have been created by the projects there is more work to do to translate engagement with Breaking Boundaries into other forms of community engagement. It is the evaluators view that this focus should have been more embedded from the outset of programme delivery in the Cities rather than being targeted in the final stages of the programme.

Again, the CLFs initiated by the programme also demonstrated a key approach for fostering community participation and a resultant sense of belonging through their invitation and participation in them.

¹⁶ Co-production refers to a 'collaboration between City teams, community organisations, Community Champions and in some circumstances, participants involving joint decision-making on both process and outcomes'

Sixty-one per cent of participants¹⁷ reported that their participation in activities with others from their local community had increased because of the programme, though 32% said there had been no change with less than one in ten saying it had decreased. Champions concur, with 50% saying that Breaking Boundaries has changed the extent to which people from different backgrounds take part in community activities together.

Sense of belonging was a little stronger in City and participant interviews as the new activities and opportunities created by Breaking Boundaries to engage were helping to improve that sense for participants. This meant they had a stronger sense of belonging in their local communities such that on joining the programme 43% of participants said they had a strong sense of belonging with this rising to 59% following participation.

The key ways in which this has been approached include visits to faith centres and activities to understand the festivals, traditions and issues faced by them but also by providing opportunities to join something that became an important part of their day to day lives whilst the activity operated:

“It was such an amazing platform for women to come together to a place where we could talk and comfort each other, it was a relief, it was our time, it was for us and we were allowed to have that time, for many women, they didn't have that opportunity before, those weeks and sessions have made such a difference, that one hour a week is embedded in now, it's an hour for us.” **(Female, South Asian, Slough)**

Other activity examples included:

- Weekly wellbeing walks, talks with occasional cricket teas between Asian and White British women and the Bhangra Blaze activities in Birmingham;
- Multi-faith cricket tournament and intergenerational dance sessions fostering engagement and facilitated conversations in Bradford;
- Weekly multi-sports and school session mixing young people from Asian and Afro-Caribbean groups to also discuss their lived experience in Manchester;
- A state v. public school cricket tournament and local community partnership family funday tackling parallel lived experience in Slough.

Breaking Boundaries activities were also achieving this by supporting community-based participation through the activity programmes that are being offered. As a first step, approaches to ensure that activity delivery was fun and engaging did seem to bear fruit helping to foster a sense of belonging that enabled community participation amongst participants.

¹⁷ N=125.

“I loved the fun and people coming together from different backgrounds and cultures, just having fun. It's a Punjabi and Bhangra dancing class incorporating cricket moves which we do over Zoom, there's also a fitness class I take part in run by Breaking Boundaries.” **(Female, Dance Participant, Barking)**

“The Archery activity was very well organised and the person leading the activities is very enthusiastic. I have really enjoyed the activity but more importantly I have been able to meet people and make new friends and I have been made to feel very welcome.” **(Male, Archery Participant, Barking)**

“I enjoyed meeting different people, everyone there was confident about it and happy about it, some who were really good at playing cricket and they were helping out the people who didn't know how to play.” **(Female, Cricket Participant, Bradford)**

A key area of focus around this cohesion outcome is also (like the empowerment measure) around tackling the sense of ‘parallel lives’ of different targeted community groups. Thus, activities seek to bring groups together who might not otherwise come together to participate in activities in their community.

“I think it's just feeling accepted and welcomed and being part of the community. A few years ago, I did Bollywood dancing, I loved the community aspect, it got rid of the isolation I was feeling. This is very similar; it brightens up my day.” **(Female, Dance Participant, Barking)**

“I took my son there who's deaf because it was something that he could take part in and he enjoyed playing cricket, not so much the fielding as that involved running around, he enjoyed interacting with other people the same age as him as he really likes to be involved with other people, he goes to a deaf school so hasn't got many friends in the area really.” **(Female Parent of Participant, Birmingham)**

However, for both areas there remain questions from the evaluation about how ‘deep’ these outcomes are for participants. Follow up interviews with participants tended to show a much greater focus on the activities they did with others and the connection within the sessions. There was more limited evidence that any of these links had been extended beyond the programme into the wider everyday lives of these participants.

Opportunities to increase community participation and sense of belonging outcomes

The learning drawn from the evaluation shows that deeper outcomes could be drawn through approaches very similar to the empowerment and community voice approaches identified above. Two in particular are likely to provide the best opportunities here including:

- **Developing focussed activities around specific common cause issues** identified through co-production work;
- Facilitating the groups **building more opportunities for day-to-day contact** between groups outside Breaking Boundaries activities to better understand the parallel lives led.

Further specific details on these can be found in [Appendix 8](#).

3.1.4 Improved partnership working

This is an area of stronger outcome performance with all delivery partner interviewees able to identify partners they have begun to work with on consultation and activity development and delivery because of their Breaking Boundaries engagement, whilst also extending existing relationships. However, the stronger new partnership links have come from those developed through the more targeted work that accompanied the post-pandemic return of Breaking Boundaries from June 2021. The final figures for the programme show that 222 partners had been worked with since the programme began, this is an increase on the 60 partners at the end of Year 2 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic

This shows that the initial work in the first years of Breaking Boundaries was less successful with City lead and partners indicating that partnership connection was shallower and less focussed on developing specific actions or activities around cohesion from it.

Using a more targeted approach has led to the development of connections in other linked areas to cohesion such as the work with the Youth Offending Team in Slough, or connections with temporary accommodation arrangements for refugees by a school fostered by the programme in Birmingham.

In the YOT example, the Slough Coordinator highlighted how it had been brokered through Breaking Boundaries. This had brought partners together around the shared goal of developing a stronger sense of belonging for the young people the YOT were working with to thus encourage them to move away from criminal behaviour. It also brought the participants more confidence to speak up to authority and increased awareness of social issues, whilst the discussions in the group focussed on identity and sense of belonging.

In Birmingham, future opportunities for partnership working to support younger age groups were highlighted:

“Although attendance from George Dixon [school] was low, the school felt it was very beneficial to build the partnerships and are keen to link up with Living Well and the residents again for other holiday projects going forward. The Headteacher of the school also had conversations with the residents and their parents to discuss possible links to the school and future attendance at the school for residents for younger generations.
(Community Coordinator, Birmingham)

What was also highlighted in the staff interviews was that partnership development was actively fostered by the greater levels of trust that emerged between partners who were brought together by the programme.

“I think there's definitely been an increase in trust between the community groups that we're working with at the moment and ourselves. A lot of these groups are sort of hard-to-reach groups. We've built a real strong rapport with some of these groups, to the point where we know we've got their trust now, and some of these groups are continuing to work with us on a local level.” **(Community Coordinator, Manchester)**

“Some of the relationships we have now with the groups we wouldn't have had to the extent we have them without Breaking Boundaries. Our community engagement was shallow before and groups are a small part of that engagement tool. Now being invited to dinners and for coffee...[with them]...it puts us in good stead. We work more with the groups now and they have a really good cohort we can engage. That has gone out into the whole team a little more now. They're engaging with poverty forums and generally deeper conversations. We can sit down with groups and work with them.” **(Community Coordinator, Slough)**

Engaged local partners suggested that Breaking Boundaries' key strength was the links with other organisations and community projects that have been developed through the most recent work through the CLFs¹⁸ that led to independent working between paired community organisations. This was noted by interviewees as being strong where it was also facilitated by local cohesion teams or experts who helped extend the partnership working into planning and activity development aligned with local strategic partnerships.

¹⁸ See [Chapter 4](#) for more details of the forum's activities.

“Since we've linked up and started collaborating and working together, I think we've opened up different markets or different demographics that we probably might not have worked with in the past.” **(Community Partner, Manchester)**

“Breaking Boundaries has been really helpful in helping us think through our activities, it's really enabled us to build relationships with groups that we potentially wouldn't have had connections with or would have had to start from scratch. But because of the projects, we're already halfway there, we've already got some great relationships with some community groups and some youth groups, and off the back of that we're enabling, we're going to be able to connect our activities, and really, really promote and encourage girls.” **(Community Partner, Birmingham)**

This was primarily delivered through the facilitation, brokerage, and outreach work undertaken by Community Coordinators, facilitated by the Community Champions, and supported by the Sporting Equals Activators, and local Cohesion leads. It highlights how continued ongoing work was critical to sustain these partnerships, particularly in return from COVID-19.

This has been driven by a focus on fostering partnership development highlighted in previous evaluation reports, though there remains a need for a continued focus on this. Although some work was done on this in the exit planning that Cities developed this may not have been extensive enough for all the partnership development work to see continued outcomes now the City teams are no longer in place. With the focus on restart from June 2021, exit planning did not receive specific focus until early Spring 2022 with exit plans detailed in the Summer 2022 arguably too close to the end of the programme to be fully implemented.

This is important because City staff highlighted how most of the partner management took up to at least three to six months to establish and maintain relationships. The programme's experience from its enforced pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic showed how the partner relationships readily declined without such input. Whilst some plans (proposed continuation of CLF style events and linking partners to funding forums) have been put in place for this, the exit plans highlight approaches that are reliant on partner relationships and engagement to be strong enough for them to continue to be driven by the community partners themselves.

Other examples of outcomes in this area included:

Examples of stronger partnership working

Working with partners outside physical activity: Slough's work with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) had taken several years to establish but had been brokered through Breaking Boundaries with a shared focus on developing a stronger sense of belonging for young people involved with the YOT. In Birmingham building on previous partner links developed a new project in limited time bringing together the White British community with refugees who were occupying multiple hotels in the targeted area though work with the Living Well Consortium and George Dixon School. This led to an initial programme of eight sessions of multi-sports activities and cohesion discussions that linked the White British pupils at the school with Arab and European young people in the temporary accommodation provided by the Cobden Hotel.

Building connection: In Manchester, the Breaking Boundaries team engaged all community organisation leads to come together monthly for social cricket themed get togethers. Each get together involved a cricket themed activity, lunch, and an opportunity for organisations to share their views on the programme. The get togethers provide an opportunity for organisations to connect better with each other and increase attitudes to diversity by learning about other cultures and religions.

Opportunities to increase partnership development to support greater community cohesion outcomes

Evaluation findings highlight key practice to enhance the outcomes in this area showing that a stronger focus throughout ongoing delivery on smaller and more targeted partnership working allows stronger and deeper relationship to be built that then support other partnership working.

Further specific details on these can be found in [Appendix 8](#).

3.1.5 Improved wellbeing

This is an area of more limited outcome from the programme and was often seen as a secondary outcome area for City delivery. Some wellbeing outcomes were identified by participants and staff who had seen activities taking place. These were most around improved confidence, socialisation (tackling social isolation), and related mental health benefits arising from engagement with, and participation in the activities provided by Breaking Boundaries.

Champions saw positive changes for themselves with all Wellbeing areas improving and with increases in life satisfaction and happiness, whilst their Anxiety levels also fell. This perhaps reflects the greater level of programme engagement Champions had through the training and the wider range of activities they were involved in. Furthermore, 53% of Champions highlighted that their overall confidence had been improved by their experience.

Baseline interviews¹⁹ with participants on joining the programme showed that most were broadly satisfied with their wellbeing with scores here broadly in line with levels in the UK population²⁰. 75% of respondents said they had high, or very high, levels of life satisfaction and around two thirds reporting low, or very low, levels of Anxiety. For participants average scores for life satisfaction and happiness have been improved, whilst for the sense that things in their life are worthwhile has changed slightly negatively and levels of anxiety have worsened.

Whilst the increase in anxiety could be linked to COVID-19 impacts, this also shows that the pandemic has also negatively affected life satisfaction and happiness. The ONS confirms this showing how all four Wellbeing measures were negatively impacted by the pandemic with anxiety levels rising.²¹ The ONS note further how these issues have been further exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis.²²

For participants their engagement in the programme was through one activity over a relatively short period of six to 12 sessions perhaps spread over two to three months for most project activities.

Reflections from those leading activities also shows some wellbeing change in participants arose from socialisation, participation, and engagement with others that Breaking Boundaries provided through its activities.

Breaking Boundaries has also played its part in bring some relief to participants with benefits around mental health particularly around short-term mental health benefits for participants especially as lockdown restrictions ended and the programme resumed activities all contributing to an improved the sense of wellbeing.

“I have really enjoyed seeing people come out of their shell, I'm used to doing other voluntary things, originally when it started off there were a lot of older people and quite a few of the ladies' health took a turn for the worst after lockdown so there's fewer people but I think there's a better mix of ages now. I enjoy being part of something and helping to make a difference, helping to organise things, I just enjoy it.” **(Project lead, Slough)**

¹⁹ 75 respondents.

²⁰ See <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing>

²¹ See [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest insights - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/coronavirus).

²² See [Cost of living: Impact on public wellbeing - House of Lords Library \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/libraries/houseoflords/publications/cost-of-living-impact-on-public-wellbeing).

“I think it's been good for my children for them to gain that confidence other than in school as that was one of the key things that was picked up in one of my daughter's school reports was that she needs to participate in more sports outside of school to build that confidence and that was one reason why I was looking out for things. I enjoyed the fact that the children enjoyed it, and they were getting exercise at the same time and making new friends as well.” (**Black Female, Birmingham**).

However, evidence on significant change in participant wellbeing is weak beyond that arising from engagement in activity sessions and the confidence benefits that has brought around a post-pandemic return to activity. For Champions who were more ingrained in their engagement with the programme, the picture is more positive. This illustrates that cohesion work needs more deeper engagement to effect change by surrounding those individuals with a range of experiences that help in fostering behaviour and attitude changes.

Champions highlighted consistent positive changes in their life satisfaction, sense that life was worthwhile and happiness whilst also noting lowered anxiety levels which they attributed to their Breaking Boundaries experiences.

Other examples of outcomes in this area included:

Examples of increased wellbeing
<p>Intergenerational activity: In Slough the Ujala Foundation has been helped by Breaking Boundaries to secure a wide range of materials, e.g. sewing machines and art supplies, and recruit a fitness instructor to offer the women heavily subsidised exercise classes (£1 per person per session). Women who attend the sessions identify they have helped them with social isolation and loneliness because it has brought them into contact with other women they wouldn't have otherwise engaged with.</p> <p>Bolly Bhangra in Birmingham facilitated mixing between women from different South Asian ethnic groups, to tackle underlying tensions between different groups of South Asian women from Bangladeshi, Gujarati, and Pakistani backgrounds. There was evidence not only of improved confidence in the women, but the wellbeing benefits that come with it. The leader reported the activity also supported the mental health of participants that had worsened during COVID-19 lockdowns.</p>

Opportunities to increasing wellbeing outcome impacts

The evaluation highlights that greater outcomes in this area could have been achieved by:

- **Focussing on a more limited range of wellbeing measures** perhaps life satisfaction with also a targeting on improved mental health;
- **Using co-production work with partners to identify a focus** more relevant to the groups being worked with.

Further detail on potential focus for this work can be found in [Appendix 8](#).

3.1.6 Improved knowledge and skills to support community cohesion

The five original Community Coordinators took part in the apprenticeships delivered through the programme in its first two years of delivery.

The Apprenticeship (Level 3 Community Sport and Health Officer) was offered by Street Games to “initiate behaviour change in local residents with regards to engagement in sport and physical activity across local communities”. Further detail on the knowledge and skills developed through the apprenticeship can be found in [Appendix 9](#).

All the five original Coordinators passed the qualification showing that they had demonstrated improved knowledge and skills around supporting community cohesion. Coordinators were also able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the pursuit of other similar employment²³ illustrating how their training through Breaking Boundaries and experiences on the programme did improve their overall employability.

"Before taking on the role I didn't have aspirations of working in this field of work. I have enjoyed working with different communities and groups. I want to continue working in sports and community areas of work."
(Coordinator 1)

"It has opened doors for me in terms of career opportunities and progression." **(Coordinator 2)**

Improved knowledge around cohesion for Coordinators was also highlighted in terms of improved understanding of where to reach out, the need for persistent yet patient pursuit of community groups to secure engagement and partnership links, and the complexity of issues that underlie cohesion issues (Belong 2020²⁴).

²³ This included three Coordinators moving on to manage another physical activity programme, work for the local authority, or in roles associated with community engagement for the NHS.

²⁴ See <https://www.belongnetwork.co.uk/resources/the-power-of-sport-guidance-on-strengthening-cohesion-and-integration-through-sport/> for more details.

However, the changed circumstances of delivery on return from the COVID-19 pandemic meant that recruitment of new Coordinators in Birmingham, Bradford and Manchester from 2021 was concentrated on more experienced staff with specific expertise in community development. This was intended to ensure that community consultation and co-produced delivery was able to resume as quickly as possible for the last 16-18 months of the programme, and outcomes in these areas demonstrate this strategy was successful.

Despite this change, the improved employability of key programme staff was shown by Coordinators and Champions who (where utilised) identified that they had improved their skills and knowledge around community cohesion identifying extended skills across a range of measures from their Breaking Boundaries role in:

- Communication
- Team working
- Leadership
- Resilience
- Empathy
- Self-Belief
- Confidence.

“I've improved my team working skills, communication, building confidence and leadership skills which I'm using everyday talking to my friends and just by being better in social situations now.” (**Community Champion, Manchester**)

“Meeting different people and working with different organisations has enabled me to network a lot more, for example because I worked with an organisation in running an event, they had access to contacts I wasn't aware of so I've tapped into their resources.” (**Community Champion, Slough**)

The follow up survey with Champions showed that they saw the biggest changes for themselves from their Breaking Boundaries experience in their leadership and teamworking skills with over half (53%) saying these were a lot better.

Figure 3.1: Proportion of Champions reporting skills that are a lot/a little better as a result of their Breaking Boundaries experience



Source: Champion Follow Up Survey (N=38)

Champions also highlighted how the role brought them progress at school, college or work, greater confidence and additional skills in leading activities around cohesion:

"We attended the Breaking Boundaries community champion day, which was fantastic. I've started taking on more of a leadership voluntary role...the skills that I learned at the Breaking Boundaries leadership day was fantastic. I got a lot more confident, leading activities, helping others in their activities. And this was crucial during lockdown. As I was able to take over and run the majority of the sessions for the latter half of lockdown." **(Community Champion, Bradford)**

Some have also gained employment through the programme as a Champion in Bradford also identified:

"We also were volunteering with Breaking Boundaries for a while, and we've got a job out of it. So now we are part time youth workers and that's been the biggest achievement for both of us." **(Female Participant, Bradford)**

The CLFs have also contributed to delivery against this outcome highlighting the importance of the need to link effectively with community organisations to reach community groups. This also demonstrated to Coordinators that by targeting such community organisations it is possible to access better skills and local knowledge of the issues facing communities. Illustrating that where staff have taken more of a step back they have been able to use this local knowledge and expertise to better shape their delivery and know what developments need to be put in place.

Delivery examples

Breaking Boundaries has funded several activities at the **Al Madina Mosque in Barking** that use the coaches there (many non-Muslims themselves) to deliver activities. Activities fuse sporting activity with socialising to bring different groups of young people across religious and ethnic group to take part together. Breaking Boundaries has also linked to other community organisations in the borough through the Mosque to persuade them of the value of bringing physical activity to their offer when this may not have been part of the existing institutions' profile of activity.

"[The Mosque]...can spread the word as well, we are a sounding board for other organisations." (**Project Lead, Al Madina**)

Project leads in interviews also highlighted their own learning on the need for regular and consistent information sharing with community partners to keep their groups informed so that perspectives on the parallel lives of different groups, or concern about lack of opportunities for some, can help foster the cohesion work of the programme. This can then be supported through the partnerships being established, and through subsequently regularly reengaging with partners in faith centres and leaders to drive things forward and build further connections with, and access to, new community groups.

"Leaders are protective of their members and are keen to ensure that offers are right for them before proceeding they want to avoid activity for activity's sake." (**Community Coordinator, Birmingham**)

City leads, Coordinators and Community Champions also highlighted that they wanted more training input and upskilling around greater integration between groups, and ways of fostering this. They also identified that it would have been useful for other team members within their organisations to support wider roll out of the programme. The programme management team provided further emphasis on linking with community partners to source this and also distributed resources to teams drawn from the Belong Power of Sport toolkit to enable teams to develop their skills independently as well.

Other outcomes in the area included:

Examples of improved knowledge and skills to support community cohesion

Qualifications: All the five original Coordinators passed an apprenticeship qualification showing that they had demonstrated improved knowledge and skills around supporting community cohesion. Coordinators were also able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the pursuit of other similar employment²⁵ illustrating how their training through Breaking Boundaries and experiences on the programme improved their employability.

Community Leadership Forums (CLFs): In Birmingham, Breaking Boundaries worked with a local organisation, the Feast, who has developed expertise in promoting cohesion between young people of different faiths and cultures in their communities. The Feast provided training at the Breaking Boundaries City Leadership Forum to provide insight in the way delivery staff could facilitate conversations between young people from different backgrounds and reflect on conversations that could lead to future positive outcomes.

Changing roles and responsibilities: In Manchester, city team staff highlighted how their understanding of communities and community development focus had been enhanced by their programme experiences to extend sports development work to include greater community development elements. In Bradford, Community Champions undertook more volunteering and were able to become part time youth workers because of their Breaking Boundaries experiences. Teams acknowledged the need to get local cohesion teams (where available) on board early to help drive delivery forwards.

²⁵ This included three Coordinators moving on to manage another physical activity programme, work for the local authority, or in roles associated with community engagement for the NHS.

Opportunities to increase knowledge and skill development for cohesion delivery

Examples here drawn from the evaluation findings include:

- **Using local community insight more centrally to shape skill and knowledge development** activities particularly seeking advice from youth work organisations;
- Getting **local community organisations to lead knowledge and skill development work**;
- **Using the local cohesion strategy and team (if in place) to help co-produce skills profiles** that can then be developed amongst those delivering and support project activity.

Further detail on these examples can be found in [Appendix 8](#).

4. Assessment of Programme Delivery and Management

Summary

This chapter examines five key areas of the Breaking Boundaries delivery model that have had particular impacts on delivery. It highlights how the programme has responded to learning from delivery to become more flexible but also work in a more targeted and focused way which has seen delivery improve in its final year.

Use of community champions was significantly affected by COVID-19 and although 379 were recruited and trained by the programme many were utilised very little or not at all and drifted away from the programme. This has created a valuable pool of cohesion Champions that remain underutilised and could be used in the future if they can be linked with through their community partner hosts.

4.1 Delivery Model

The following key issues and strengths have emerged about five main elements of the Breaking Boundaries delivery model that have contributed to the challenges the programme has faced in attaining its main cohesion outcomes.

These focussed on:

- Programme management through YST and Sporting Equals;
- Community Coordinator model
- Use of Community Champions
- Activation Grants
- City Leadership Forums (CLFs)

4.1.1 Programme Management

Overall programme management for Breaking Boundaries was shared between Sporting Equals and YST, with YST as the main accountable body. Sporting Equals were expected to oversee project delivery at a local level whilst also providing specialist cohesion expertise through Activators who worked one day week with Coordinators to identify key community connections to be made to support delivery and participant recruitment.

Cities felt this model of operation had not worked as effectively as it could have done and that more effort to ensure consistent communication and messaging from YST and Sporting Equals would have been beneficial.

They also would have valued greater trust to deliver or drive the project forward, but this must be balanced against the needs for the programme to deliver against its funding agreement with Spirit and some pressure on City teams was needed.

“[In managing the programme]...there are two large national orgs with different views and principles. It would have been better to let the project go with what they felt was right. There was too much dictation, and this doesn’t work. We know what the communities need most. In the end, we listened to the communities and did what they wanted to do rather than it being dictated.” **(Community Coordinator 4)**

Cities wanted to take a more flexible approach which was responded to by the programme management team in the last 18 months of the programme where a flexible Local Delivery pot of £23k per city was identified which the cities themselves could utilise to run delivery or allocate for community led delivery. This rectified the situation in the first two years of programme delivery where approaches to community led delivery by the programme management team were too restrictive.

From a programme management perspective, this showed a strength in the flexibility that underpinned the programme in its latter stages as this management was needed. This was because Breaking Boundaries was showing underperformance in its first two years primarily due to the limited readiness and infrastructure available in each city to support cohesion work. Thus it was felt that more input was needed to ensure that cities focussed more specifically on achieving cohesion outcomes whilst using local intelligence gathered through consultations and the CLFs to shape delivery going forwards. This has helped the programme to respond to learning to reshape and rescope its approach that has improved delivery against some cohesion outcomes with a stronger focus on the original aims of CCC supporting those improvements. Furthermore, the more extensive use of specialist local skills and knowledge through local community groups has demonstrated the value this can bring to a programme of this type, and it has played a key role in supporting delivery in the final phases of the programme. The challenge is to ensure this continues.

4.1.2 Community Coordinators

Feedback on the role from line managers and the Coordinators themselves was that the coordinator role was much more difficult and complex than what had been initially thought.

Despite success in apprenticeship completion and development of the assessed skills and knowledge, line managers and Coordinators came to understand that the role was much more than a traditional sports development role and required a different set of skills.

Specifically, the role required skills to communicate effectively with community partners, to have the confidence to meet, engage and influence community organisations. They also felt that understanding some of the community issues in the target areas was important and having the means to communicate and understand some of the cohesion issues was vital to the role. These could have been reflected in clearer job descriptions for Coordinator recruitment. The learning highlights that given the complexity of the cohesion issues faced Coordinators needed strong line management approaches with them working more in tandem to support each other in addressing these issues through delivery.

A further factor in the variable delivery across the five cities was the inconsistent approach to line management in some areas. In some cases Coordinators said they had not been as fully supported as they had expected and were often left to work independently without ongoing support. This illustrates the critical role of dedicated line management that provides ongoing support for the Coordinator not just to support their own personal and professional development but also to work jointly with community partners to unpack, understand, and address, local cohesion issues. Issues which can be very complex and require a wide-ranging approach to address supported by local sources of expertise.

The original delivery model for development of the Coordinators was refined over the course of the programme. Originally, Coordinators recruited through an Apprenticeship were expected to be employed by the programme for 18 months with a further Apprentice recruited for an additional 18-24 months to cover the last year of original delivery. The pausing of delivery due to COVID-19 led to refinement of the model where more experienced staff members were used, based on experience in Bradford. This was done to enable a prompt return to activity through employing staff with more community development experience than the more inexperienced Apprentices recruited in the first round. This was a sensible change and refinement to delivery, that supported the extended partnership development outcomes identified above and illustrates how the programme also adhered to Spirit's focus on learning from previous mistakes in delivery.

4.1.3 Use of Community Champions

Three-hundred and seventy-nine Champions were recruited and trained by the programme over its lifetime. Early cohorts were utilised extensively to support programme and project delivery which brought significant benefits to them as individuals developing new skills and capabilities available to the programme and wider community.

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically curtailed the involvement of Community Champions in programme delivery as activities were restricted opportunities for Champions to be involved in online delivery were very limited. Consequently, there have been a cohort of 171 Champions recruited and trained by the programme between October 2019 and March 2020 who have been unable to fully contribute to delivery as expected. It is unclear how many of these individuals have been lost to the programme but there may be opportunities to re-engage them with activity outside of Breaking Boundaries by encouraging community partners who identified them in the first instance to revisit this cohort to support further cohesion work in the future. It's clear that utilisation is a key factor in retaining these young people so their training can be put to as immediate use as possible.

4.1.4 Activation Grants

Activation grants were intended to be funds that could be allocated to project activities identified by the Youth Change Leadership Team working with the Community Coordinator in each delivery area. The original financial plans for these identified that £12k would be available for this purpose across the three years of programme delivery equating to a flexible grant fund of £36k. Analysis of the grant funding in the first two years shows that these funds were fully utilised in Years 1 and 2 of the programme.

All of 18/23 completed grants to return monitoring data in Year 1 were used to fund a one-off event with four being linked into the further delivery of more activities. The majority of these were entirely new events to the locations in which they were run, and the Grants were often the main reason why the events had been able to take place. Year 2 delivery was more focussed on running specific activities and this has allowed a range of activities to be taken forward by the programme that wouldn't have otherwise happened.

“Without funding, it is very difficult to put on an attractive project – there is a cost to everything as everyone has to be able to fund activities/equipment/and give up their time and expertise.” **(Activation Grant Holder)**

“Without the Breaking Boundaries Activation Grant the project quite simply couldn't have happened. Your support allowed us to deliver an innovative event that built links across our town, provided young people with a plethora of new skills and built capacity within our organisations: thank you!” **(Grant Lead)**

They also enabled the development of events that established some new links to the communities in which they were run. Local communities have provided volunteers (separate to Champions) to help run the event whilst community members helped deliver, promote, and design the events and activities.

These links with the community were also highlighted by Activation Grant holders as one of the main contributory factors in their identification that events/activities had worked well in the community, or as several partner interviewees referred to how success came from 'local people being deeply invested in what the event/activity was trying to deliver'. Some examples of the use of Activation Grants can be found below:

Activation Grant Use: Bangladeshi V Pakistani Interfaith community cricket
- Bradford.

Two prominent community groups within the same ward (Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups) who do not mix, and live parallel lives joined together to play in a friendly interfaith cricket festival held at a neutral ground, Park Avenue during a cricket festival week. The social event involved children and young people from both community groups coming together and participating in cricket activities during the morning followed by the interfaith cricket match. The social event helped change some negative perceptions and attitudes to local issues that were contributing to some tensions between the two groups.

It allowed the community voice to come together and organise an intercultural event which overcame the local tensions between the Bangladeshi and Pakistani community groups. Working with a local partner, the two teams are now able to have access to the cricket ground where they can run similar events and social cricket matches.

Activation Grant Use: Community Event - Manchester

Youth on Solid Ground delivered one of the first activation grants in Manchester which was a great success, nearly 100 people participated in a community BBQ with music, games, and cricket on the day. The event brought different community groups together.

Through this, Youth on Solid Ground have benefited by giving some of the young people they have been working with from the targeted wards a chance to attend a professional cricket match. Some of the young people had never been to a professional game before, so it was a great opportunity.

Secondly, young people have had a chance to have professional cricket coaching lessons led by a qualified coach. Some of their participants have never played cricket before and they really enjoyed the creative games they had the opportunity to play.

Unfortunately, there was continuing confusion amongst some local partners about the principles and practice underpinning the allocation of Activation Grants, which remained into the early months of post-pandemic delivery. This illustrates the need to consistently update partners on the purpose and aims of the funding and for them to highlight how project ideas actively contribute to the programme aims. The development of the £23k project funding pot to be used flexibly was a positive step forward.

4.1.5 City Leadership Forums

The City Leadership Forums (CLFs) were a further refinement to the programme delivery model that sought to build a stronger, more consistent community consultation approach that aimed to support the programmes efforts to be more targeted. This set a task for Coordinators to identify community organisations that could be paired to review local cohesion issues.

One of the other key drivers for this was to support implementation of findings from the Year 2 evaluation and thus Cities were encouraged to identify ways in which they could identify new working relationships with community groups the programme had done less work with in previous years, including Black African and Caribbean groups, moves to bring different religious groups together, and develop relationships with community organisations the programme had yet to work with. To facilitate this, the programme management team agreed with each city team that three CLFs would be scheduled in each area between September 2021 and January 2022.

The CLFs were able to identify specific community groups that would be engaged by planned activities. These 'pairings' did co-produce activities to address identified cohesion issues identifying a more limited programme of activities which were focussed more on creating experiences and project delivery to enable 'deeper' engagement between targeted communities with less of a focus upon attaining large volumes of participants on Breaking Boundaries activities.

The CLFs in Birmingham, Manchester, and Slough proved to be the most successful because they developed the strongest relationships with targeted community organisations which facilitated subsequent co-production work. This contributed directly to a range of activities included in implementation plans cities developed between January and September 2022.

“The project has made the groups think about other organisations they may or not share and interest and encouraged them to reach out. This is something that probably wouldn’t happen, due to the nature of people’s work, now they have a reason to get to know another organisation they wouldn’t normally do.” (**Community Coordinator, Manchester**)

There is a need to identify how these forums might continue in the future given the useful opportunity they provide to discuss cohesion issues that do not usually happen outside of Breaking Boundaries. This could be a role for local specialist cohesion teams where they exist in the local authority or via a cohesion focussed voluntary and community sector infrastructure body like a local Council of Voluntary Service.

5. Programme Sustainability

Summary

This chapter reports on the findings from review of the sustainability of programme delivery drawn from programme staff and stakeholder interviews and review of exit and legacy planning undertaken by City teams.

It shows that these planning activities have been limited and have needed more detail for an effective programme legacy to be developed beyond the limited positive examples highlighted in the reports.

5.1 Programme Legacy

Programme legacy planning and its contribution to sustainability of the Breaking Boundaries programme has been outlined through the final iterations of project quarterly reports.

Exit action plans have been detailed in September 2022 for all Cities with final iterations in November 2022 from Birmingham and Bradford. These plans share headline details on the approach and practice they seek to implement. Key common areas where some activities have been undertaken include:

- Group emails circulated connecting organisations who have consented to their contact details being shared;
- Distribution of funding opportunities and linkage with local funding forums to provide support around future funding for community organisations engaged by the programme;
- Training offers to support funding bids and further development of skills in work around community cohesion;
- Links to cohesion strategy teams brokered for community partners.

There are however some specific activities in some locations notably Birmingham, Manchester and Slough that offer some useful approaches for sustaining the community connections Breaking Boundaries has been able to take forward. Thus, in Birmingham community partners have been linked to volunteering opportunities at Edgbaston stadium as a way of ensuring continued engagement of Community Champions. Slough have also made links to the volunteering hub to also provide access to available volunteering opportunities for these young people.

In Manchester, access to holiday programme opportunities has been brokered for community partners leading to three new organisations being added to the holiday programme roster. In Slough learning from Breaking Boundaries was used to support the drafting of the first specific sport and physical activity cohesion strategy.

Key elements of legacy identified in relation to the programme include changed working approaches around activity development which have a greater focus on community development approaches than traditional sports development work.

“The more we spoke to communities, the more we were able to shape the programme. We also changed significantly. We moved in a completely different direction in the way the council operated. That supported some of the engagement in BB and communicating with residents. I don’t think we would have engaged with the groups and the young people we have if it wasn’t for BB.” (Line Manager, Slough)

There are also signs that stakeholders involved in work with the programme have also been influenced to seek greater input in their decision making from young people.

“I think some of the things that we continue because of breaking boundaries are definitely putting young people at the forefront of a lot of decision making and a lot of opportunities. Being able to meet young people, leaders within their communities is really important and a really big driver for the city moving forwards.” (Stakeholder, Birmingham)

However, there remain concerns as both City staff and Champions identified they were uncertain about how ongoing plans might be implemented meaning that many legacy plans are reliant upon community partners to take actions forward independently of the programme. The experience of COVID-19 suggests this may be challenging when considered against the way in which activity by community organisations stalled when they were not being pressed by City staff or had activities supported by the programme to engage with.

“What we haven’t got to the bottom of is the cohesion strategy, though we are able to use some of this data and some of this experience to see how to move forward.” (Community Coordinator, Slough)

This is important because without a strategic link to other activities or developments there are limited opportunities outside the programme for the learning from Breaking Boundaries to be taken forward outside of the infrastructure the programme created.

Furthermore, Champions were also unclear how they could be further involved in future which is important if Champions are to be utilised for delivery beyond Breaking Boundaries clear progression or transition opportunities also need to be available.

“I would like to get more involved with the programme and its approaches in other areas. [I’m]...not sure how to get more involved in the future though.” (**Community Champion, Barking**)

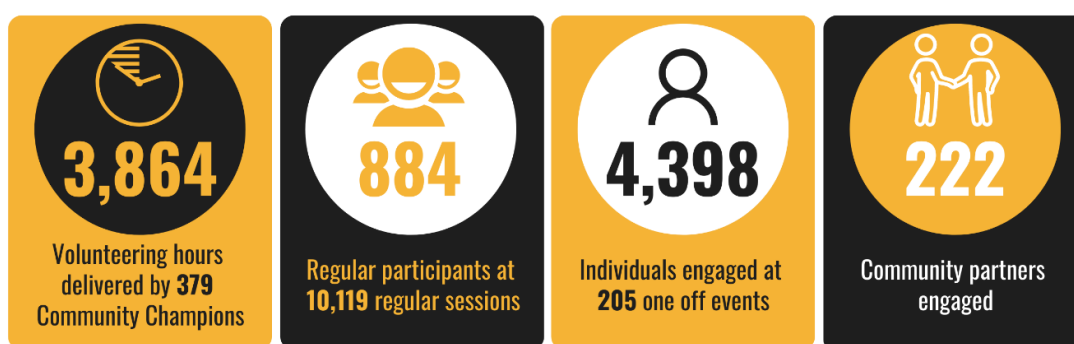
Like other areas of its delivery programme sustainability shows some examples of where it might be possible, but these are limited, and from reviewing the evidence very reliant on organisations or individual Champions taking independent action. A situation for which the precedent is poor, though there remain some important lessons that can be learnt from what Breaking Boundaries has managed to deliver around the complex issue of community cohesion.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

Breaking Boundaries has not only succeeded in breaking down the boundaries between communities it has broken new ground in many other ways. There is now clearly great potential to build upon, and replicate, this work and learning that has come from it to benefit cohesion and integration work and activities across the country. Breaking Boundaries has clearly changed the lives of the individuals it has involved as well as supporting the changing of attitudes and behaviours of the communities it has worked with.

Between 2018 and 2022, Breaking Boundaries achieved the following outputs:



Breaking Boundaries has also demonstrated progress across all cohesion outcome areas with the overall picture against these on a RAG scale shown in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: RAG rating of Cohesion Outcome Performance by Time

Cohesion Output Measure	Year 1	Year 2	July 2022	End of Programme
Improved social connectedness				
Improved attitudes to diversity				
Increased empowerment and community voice				
Increased community participation				
Increased sense of belonging				
Improved partnership working				
Improved wellbeing				
Improved cohesion skills and knowledge				

This shows that the positive experiences for participants through the social mixing facilitated by programme activities have brought benefits in social connectedness, community participation and voice, and partnership development with organisations and individuals being brought together for the first time and in most cases then developing new activities through that link up.

Other outcomes have proved more challenging – attitudes to diversity, increased empowerment, and improved wellbeing around life satisfaction and whether life is worthwhile but there are some positive signs of progress being made.

The programme began with a focus upon activity development rather than an explicit targeting of cohesion delivered through physical activity. It has learnt that given the complexity of the issues involved this was initially misplaced and the overall delivery model has been revised as a result to embed a focus on social cohesion more deeply in its delivery particularly in its last 16-18 months. This has aligned delivery more closely with Spirit's intentions for the CCC grant opportunity and has led to improved programme performance.

Through this shift, Breaking Boundaries has been better able to bring young people, their families, and communities together through regular engagement in activities and one-off events. When focused on socialisation, play and coaching, participation, spectating, and volunteering based around a 'cricket-themed' approach they are able to have a more central focus on contributing to improved social cohesion.

The programme did face significant barriers (including COVID-19) and for the success of the project to be more easily replicated, lessons must be learned, and new approaches adopted in the future.

6.2 Lessons

We have drawn together a range of lessons that highlight key aspects of ways of achieving success in delivering similar community cohesion projects covering:

6.2.1 Connecting with participants

Engaging

- **Reaching out through a mixed partner profile of community organisations (including interfaith groups) that work specifically with young people** is a good way to reach into communities, consistency of contact and delivery is key to ensure that trust is built overtime and builds the confidence of participants to attend regularly. Although **direct contact with community groups need not always be initiated by a programme/project** it could be initiated by other community contacts.

Outreach

- Activities that wish to connect with potential participants may need to **reassure local people that they are going to be long term options and provide clarity on the benefits for the community organisation of participation need to be clear up front.** Many are suspicious of projects that ‘drop in’ and then ‘drop out’ of areas because community links haven’t been properly established;
- **A focus solely on physical activity in the form of cricket participation only has limited appeal for many community groups** though it did act as key driver for the high levels of Pakistani participants. A more nuanced approach that builds on the social connectedness and engagement aspects of the game and widening the focus to other forms of physical activity or active recreation such as dancing or walking should be considered.

Partnership capacity building

- **Partnership meetings can focus on skill development as well as activity planning.** Cohesion work can be challenging for many, and short training and development inputs can be really valued. The offer of training on top of networking opportunities could also help persuade some more reticent organisations to attend;
- **Using local community experts as training deliverers** at local partnership events grounds delivery development around local issues. This enables training to be tailored to help partners deal with local context and issues in a better way meaning their cohesion approach can be better focussed;
- **Persistence is key**, as such partner development and engagement can often take months, and even years, to establish.

Keeping partners engaged

- **Proactive and ongoing engagement on a one-to-one basis keeps partners engaged.** This helps to build programme understanding and maintains connection even whilst activity delivery may not be ongoing. It can also be an important source of local intelligence on emerging cohesion issues that can facilitate new project/delivery development.

6.2.2 Project delivery

Replicating delivery

- **Community organisations often need specific help in setting up processes and practices** so they can easily demonstrate to others that their activities are safe and well-managed. This can be a good way to engage community organisations because they are often already struggling with these things;
- **Delivery should focus on identifying activities and ways of working that can easily be replicated in other settings** by the community group staff that will be leading the future delivery, especially young people. This helps to create activities that are less reliant upon venue availability or need specialist kit/equipment;
- Working with participants to **co-produce activity delivery helps engage them in a project whilst also building in greater potential longer-term engagement;**

- Seeking out existing activities to enhance to have a new focus on cohesion issues. **Using an existing project and supporting it to focus on cohesion through existing social elements combined with additional facilitated physical activity sessions** can be a good way to deliver these types of activities. This avoids the need to find new settings and the set up and marketing needed for newly created activities.

Embedding cohesion in delivery

- **Supporting active social mixing in an informal group setting through designated socialising time** enables a sense of belonging and confidence to be developed. New physical activity opportunities can help foster this as all participants are at a similar level and can learn the new activity together further fostering social mixing opportunities. Participants will often reveal much more about these issues and having staff/volunteers on hand can help identify some of the issues people might want support around – perhaps mental health or financial issues.

6.2.3 Addressing cohesion challenges

- **‘Pigeon holing’ of groups and issues into a delivery framework imposed from outside should be avoided if possible.** Co-production processes help build trust and empower communities to drive forward delivery that is relevant to local needs and empowers participants to see outcomes from;
- Cohesion issues may not just stem from conflict between, or the separation of communities such **challenges maybe driven by the lack of social inclusion of individuals;**
- **Cohesion challenges may exist between individuals from within the same broad ethnic groups** – Asian and Asian British, Black and Black British, Mixed and Other groups and White groups and therefore there can be real benefit from bringing together groups within any broad ethnic group.

6.2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

- **Proactive engagement with community and partners is key to build links and track programme progress** and insights into what works. Things that don’t go well are a rich source of insight;
- **Do not underestimate the challenge/complexity of cohesion** and the challenge it presents to ‘traditional’ evaluation approaches. A qualitative focus that builds insight through ‘storytelling’ and ‘issue’ conversations can often provide more insight than structured surveys;
- All delivery partners can lack skills and capacity to drive cohesion work forward and may be uncomfortable about sharing this. **Interviewers need to be flexible and non-judgemental in their data collection approach** to enable interviewees to talk honestly about their experiences and learnings;
- Clarity of programme purpose and evaluation work can be challenged by ‘stop/start’. Knowledge and understanding **‘refresh’ sessions are valuable** in ensuring all have a consistent understanding of roles and responsibilities around monitoring and evaluation;

- Simplifying and **linking discussion of cohesion issues to lived experience** helps identify evidence on progress against these dimensions. Direct questions on social connectedness or other similar dimensions work less well;
- The **term cohesion is challenging for many** – it often covers ‘scratchy’ issues that many are keen to avoid talking about. Evaluators need to reflect on this when designing questions and data collection tools.

6.3 Recommendations

Considering the lessons above, the evaluation of Breaking Boundaries identifies the following recommendations for specific audiences who maybe developing future cohesion programmes that use sport and physical activity for improved community cohesion.

The recommendations by audience cover those for:

6.3.1 Government and other policy makers

- Engagement with delivery partners for social cohesion work should only take place where they are able to demonstrate specific cohesion expertise and detailed knowledge of the communities, tensions, issues and needs to be addressed;
- Should actively demonstrate their willingness to work on a cross community basis particularly around sport and physical activity;
- Future activities should make specific reference to [‘The Power of Sport: Guidance on strengthening cohesion and integration through sport’](#) toolkit in their development and implementation.

6.3.2 Local government

- Targeted work should be undertaken to maintain and publicise the cohesion expertise within the local authority to all who may wish to work with it and ensure joined up working is central to all cohesion work at a local level;
- Additional efforts should be made to enhance and extend the connections and trust with local communities and especially young people so that the cohesion expertise is kept updated regularly reviewing and monitoring community tensions, parallel lives, and the cohesion needs that arise from them.

6.3.3 Sports organisations

- Should consistently monitor and publish analysis of the diversity of their present reach and activities to support ongoing business case review of widening participation activities;
- This should be accompanied by a clear statement on their support for cohesion work and willingness to work with partners at all levels to bring it in to effect;
- Future activities should consider making reference to [‘The Power of Sport: Guidance on strengthening cohesion and integration through sport’](#) toolkit in their development and implementation;

- Legacy building and mechanisms for its implementation should be outlined at project/programme start.

6.3.4 Community organisations

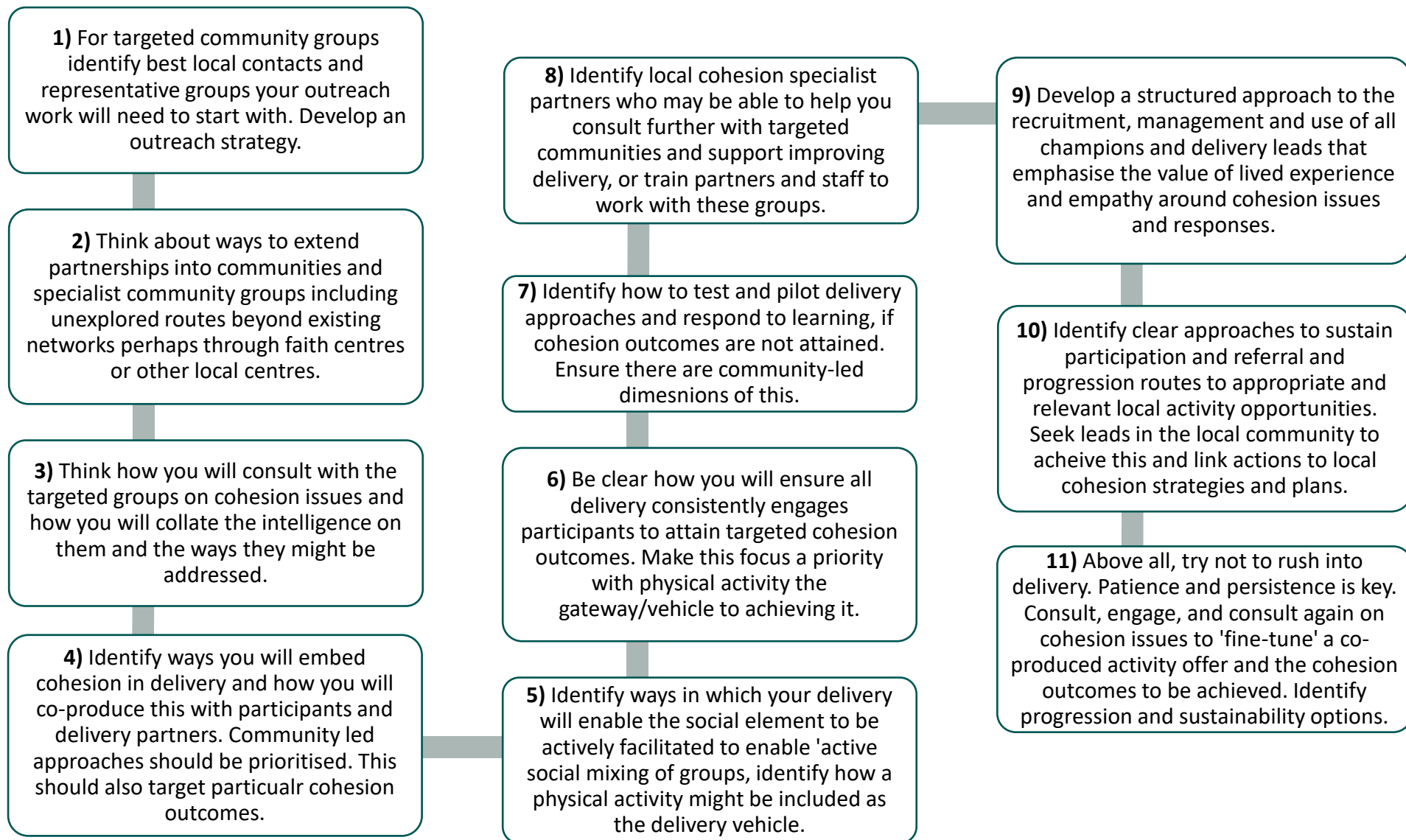
- Should clearly demonstrate their ability to challenge community stereotypes and regularly engage with different communities to facilitate social mixing between groups;
- Future activities should make specific reference to '[The Power of Sport: Guidance on strengthening cohesion and integration through sport](#)' toolkit in their development and implementation;
- Legacy building and mechanisms for its implementation should be outlined at project/programme start.

6.3.5 Funders and deliverers of cohesion programmes

- Time must be taken before starting a scheme to develop a fuller understanding of each community and the cohesion issues it faces. This is far more likely to be successfully achieved by a process of co-creation and wide engagement, especially with young people;
- Infrastructure to facilitate regular contact, discussions, and co-production work between targeted community organisations to identify needs and approaches is especially valuable to support programme development and delivery. Community and area leadership forums can be especially useful in this context. Capacity building work should be actively considered;
- Workforce development on cohesion and integration is essential for all partners, before the scheme starts, but also as it develops;
- Evaluation is essential and needs to be based on outcomes – to show how peoples' lived experiences are impacted by programme activities. This should be set up before programme delivery begins;
- The quality of interaction between individuals and communities who are different, is far more important than quantity. The value of one-off events and other superficial engagement and inflexible delivery approaches must be challenged;
- Local control of some funding decisions to support projects addressing local needs is a key way to build links and trust with targeted communities. Monitoring of such arrangements should be proportionate to the funds involved;
- Sustainability and legacy should be built into every scheme from the start. Although, other models may be possible, Breaking Boundaries had success through the creation of Community Champions, skills development and building long term change in community partnerships. All future schemes need to develop a similar approach.

6.4 Blueprint: Using physical activity to develop cohesion

This summary provides an overview, drawn from our evaluation findings, that highlights exemplars and good practice in planning, developing, and delivering Breaking Boundaries activities and projects that will provide the best opportunity to deliver similar cohesion outcomes. It's intended to guide others in their planning and development of projects so that the learning from Breaking Boundaries can be utilised to tackle the challenges and complexity of addressing community cohesion issues through provision of physical activity.



Appendix 1: Barriers to the Resumption of Programme Delivery

Some of the detailed reasons why there were delays in some localities to the resumption of Breaking Boundaries delivery included:

- Local interpretation of lockdown guidance;
- Closure of community facilities and schools and their facilities or the risk aversion of these settings;
- Impact of furlough for Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, and local authority staff being redirected to local COVID-19 responses;
- Reduced participant demand due to community concerns around infection and ongoing shielding requirements for vulnerable groups.

Appendix 2: Programme and Evaluation Background

The criteria used to select areas to be targeted by programme delivery included:

- Demographic and other local area statistics to identify areas facing deprivation, crime and anti-social behaviour challenges, and significant recent changes in resident population;
- Mapping of partners and stakeholders to identify delivery readiness;
- Assessment of strategic partner readiness in areas that were linked to ECB Core City Area and complementary funding and/or partnership working opportunities that might arise from them, and;
- Desk based review and local consultation work to highlight areas exhibiting specific needs to reduce tensions, conflict, build greater understanding, trust and empathy.

Breaking Boundaries sought to enable teams in the five locations to work with local community groups and representatives by bringing different community groups together, training delivery staff to facilitate community development, networking, and integration, and to use a cricket theme as a delivery ‘vehicle’ to bring people together that might not otherwise engage with each other or have very little ongoing engagement.

The key outputs and outcomes being measured by the programme evaluation include:

- Number and demographic profile of Coordinators, Champions, regular participants²⁶, and one-off event participants;
- Wellbeing outcomes for Coordinators, Champions, and regular participants;
- Cohesion outcomes for, and reported by, Coordinators, Champions, and regular participants focussed upon social connectedness and attitudes to diversity, empowerment and community voice, community participation and sense of belonging;
- Development outcomes for Coordinators and Champions related to partnership working, and knowledge and skills for employability, increased volunteering activity, and work around cohesion;
- Development outcomes for partners and stakeholders including improved diversity of provision, increased partnership working with organisations/community groups, improved community provision in own organisation that better meets needs of all in the community.

²⁶ Regular participants were individuals that engaged with Breaking Boundaries activities that ran for six or more sessions. These participants were expected to be formally registered by activities using an online system using Microsoft Forms set up for the evaluation.

Appendix 3: City Summaries

Barking and Dagenham (Targeted Wards: Abbey and Mayesbrook)

Local vision

Delivery for young people aimed to join community groups across cultures and languages to improve community cohesion, and improve the education and employability of young people, enhance family health and wellbeing, and celebrate different cultures through cricket.

All outputs

Barking & Dagenham	Number of Champions	Total Volunteer Hours	Number of Regular Participants	Number of Regular Sessions	Number of One-off Events	Number One-off Attendees
Year 1	24	43	22	95	12	485
Year 2	28	79	48	136	27	525
End of the programme	52	122	85	397	43	548

Delivery examples

- They ran a multisport session with Youth Spot Bar and Barking & Dagenham Tennis Club. Fifteen young people attended with four completing the participant forms (as the others were under age). The breakup of the groups involved were White British and Black Caribbean and aged 10-18. The rationale is to make them grow together and understand different cultures.
- They ran a 10-week-long archery session for young people and their families from Al Madina and the Hive in Barking. There was a mix of Black African and Pakistani backgrounds together. The sessions lasted an hour and a half each and it was a chance for both groups to not only take part in sports but have key discussions with one another about their backgrounds and give them a chance to talk about some of the similarities between their beliefs. Al Madina also led Community Champion training in archery and social integration workshops.
- The programme also established links with new groups including Sikhs in the City, a Sikh running club, and Shpresa, an Albanian Integration charity.

How Barking and Dagenham extended Partnership Working

Barking and Dagenham ran an online T20 talk for the Jo Cox Foundation Great Together Weekend in June 2020. Groups they were already worked with were asked to come on a call and have a chat about their current situations and how everyone was coping through the lockdown. The call had representation from different organisations including, TKO Boxing, the Al Madina Mosque, Barking Salvation Army, Barking and Dagenham Youth Dance (BDYD) with members from Barking and Dagenham Council and Sporting Equals.

Each organisation was able to give an update on the work that they had been completing during lockdown and how they were supporting the local communities in different roles. This included them supporting their existing members to continue to be active, providing general support to their existing members, or working with other community organisations across the Borough to provide food parcels and meals to the vulnerable residents. The event demonstrated how partners had begun to work together because of the Breaking Boundaries programme.

“We've learnt that getting our cohesion team on board early was key, making better connections with community settings and groups.” **(Host Organisation, Barking)**

“This was a wonderful opportunity for people from different faiths and backgrounds to get together in a spirit of friendly sporting rivalry and to forge new friendships on and off the pitch. All those who took part soon realised how much they had in common and how united they were in their enjoyment of the game of cricket.” **(Local Councillor, Barking and Dagenham)**

Lessons learnt:

- Working with the groups on their strengths and weaknesses;
- Helping groups to continue their legacy and grow as a project;
- Building trust with local groups is a great way to end up collaborating work with them;
- Encouraging groups to take part in activities;
- Meeting people face-to-face is more effective than phone calls/emails;
- Being proactive and keeping chasing (with emails for instance).

Birmingham (Targeted Wards: Edgbaston, Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East, and Balsall Heath West)

Vision

The project aimed to develop a community hub around Edgbaston cricket ground and other local settings to engage local community groups in cross-community engagement through cricket activities and other community events/festivals. Delivery will focus on personal development for young people, tackling exclusion from activities poverty/deprivation, and through this improve community cohesion.

Outputs

Birmingham	Number of Champions	Total Volunteer Hours	Number of Regular Participants	Number of Regular Sessions	Number of One-off Events	Number One-off Attendees
Year 1	26	59	61	12	3	106
Year 2	43	175	89	27	7	151
End of the programme	46	191	128	98	17	274

Delivery examples

- Pakistani and Bangladeshi Women attended 12 weeks of Bhangra Dancing, which allowed them to socialise and make new friends. The environment was friendly and supportive. The women proudly shared and learned with no judgment or correction despite different beliefs.
- From July to October 2022, they ran 12 ladies-only sessions of Bhangra Blaze at Sparkbrook Community Centre. They were led by Jasu Bokhiria, who is a qualified Bhangra Blaze coach. The aim of the sessions was to bring together women from different backgrounds, where there is historically tension and no opportunity to mix (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi). Each session included a dance class followed by the opportunity to socialise and was regularly attended by 10 women. The sessions have improved attitudes to diversity and generated a safe space for women, emphasising a sense of belonging and improving attitudes to diversity.
- Other examples included The Muath Trust (Pakistani) and Sport for Life (Black African) delivering a young people Wickets activity; Saheli Women (South Asian) Anawim (white) running Wellbeing walks and accompanying talks for women; and Community Champion workshops led by The Feast and Bahu Trust to increase skills and knowledge using sport as a tool to bring people together whilst discussing knife crime and local tensions.

How Birmingham empowered young females

Birmingham wanted to identify ways in which they could bring more female participants into programme delivery. It was a cohesion issue because consultation work identified that women felt isolated and removed from their community with limited engagement in some of the community developments and activities in the area. They sought first to bring girls together to help initiate consultation with them to identify ways young females could be better involved in Breaking Boundaries. This brought together young females from different schools and different ethnicity groups to feel more socially connected with each other. The delivery took place initially through a Female Empowerment Event leading into regular multi-sport activity groups provided through Breaking Boundaries delivery. The girls present were able to speak with others who they would not ordinarily associate and start connections that could be developed through future planned work together.

“There's a lot of Asian communities here and a lot of Somalian communities so it is breaking down boundaries and it's for us women to go out there who are restricted due to child commitments, due to social and economy kind of pressures but this was one hour free of charge...where I can bring the kids and play cricket with them in a safe environment without being judged and also having the opportunity to meet other people as well, like-minded people.” **(Female, Cricket Participant, Birmingham)**

“I think some of the things that we continue because of Breaking Boundaries are definitely putting young people at the forefront of a lot of decision making and a lot of opportunities. Being able to meet young people, leaders within their communities is really important and a really big driver for the city moving forwards.” **(Stakeholder, Birmingham)**

Lessons learnt

- Community organisations are still rebuilding from post-COVID and welcome support in this challenging work;
- Face-to-face community champions training helps young people build affiliation with the project;
- Allow time for community groups to develop trust with new people approaching them about projects;
- Community groups need to be told how projects and programmes can benefit their service users;
- What works for one community group may not always work for another group, so solutions need to be tailored.

Bradford (Targeted Wards: Bowling and Barkerend, Great Horton, and Little Horton)

Vision

The project aimed to develop the sense of local identity for targeted community groups. It sought to address lack of integration between these groups by tackling language barriers through a focus on cricket. The project aimed to reduce prejudice, negative attitudes of others, and promote friendships between groups. It aimed to create a safe environment for those in the community to feel confident to engage/interact with people of all backgrounds.

Outputs

Bradford	Number of Champions	Total Volunteer Hours	Number of Regular Participants	Number of Regular Sessions	Number of One-off Events	Number One-off Attendees
Year 1	29	385	53	146	10	910
Year 2	55	515	70	158	41	977
End of the programme	81	931	190	238	45	1,070

Delivery examples

- The Neighbourhood Resource Centre and British Asian Rugby Association merged together to deliver eight cricket sessions for individuals from Bangladesh and Pakistan backgrounds to improve wellbeing by making them understand each other's cultures and values. On top of cricket sessions, coffee sessions and food competitions were held with the aim to socialise and make new friends. Improved attitudes to diversity were developed towards the end of Breaking Boundaries programme where both demographics (12 individuals) between ages of 16-25 years old combined into teams for a cricket match at Park Avenue.
- Other examples included PHAB (White British/Disabled) and East Bierley Cricket Club (White/Pakistani) young people taking part in inclusive cricket sessions; Motive 8 college (Indian) and Club Ekta (Pakistani) delivering multi-sports sessions for girls; and Park Avenue Cricket Club (Bangladeshi) and Club Ekta (Pakistani) running cricket and multi-sport sessions for young people.

How Bradford made use of activation grants

Two prominent community groups within the same ward (Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups) who do not mix, and live parallel lives joined together to play in a friendly interfaith cricket festival held at a neutral ground, Park Avenue during a cricket festival week. The social event involved children and young people from both community groups coming together and participating in cricket activities during the morning followed by the interfaith cricket match. The social event helped change some negative perceptions and attitudes to local issues that were contributing to some tensions between the two groups.

It allowed the community voice to come together and organise an intercultural event which overcame the local tensions between the Bangladeshi and Pakistani community groups. Working with a local partner, the two teams now access the cricket ground for other events.

“It was seeing a group of children of diverse backgrounds coming out and doing something collectively. It shows if we put our energy and we dedicated ourselves to it, we can make a difference and that was the biggest impact for me, realising we can do something.” **(Parent of Participant, Bradford)**

“I know that it’s opened my eyes a bit because I know more about what’s going on in the community and stuff. Like before it used to be that all the youth clubs for example used to be based on your culture, so now we’ve had activities with Breaking Boundaries too, we’ve learned how to mix in with other religions and stuff, it’s made me a lot happier to know that I have friends that aren’t just my religion and stuff.” **(Community Champion, Bradford)**

Lessons learnt

- To foster new partnerships initial meetings should always focus upon identifying where objectives overlap and identify initial activities where this crossover can be used positively particularly in relation to where project activities are already being run. New project activity isn’t always needed;
- It is critical to be clear about project expectations for groups and new partners, especially about where key responsibilities will lie for running activities, marketing and image use, specific requirements of funding and what role and responsibilities different partners will take
- Building trust within communities by providing support and partnership working with Yorkshire Cricket Foundation after the racism enquiry at Yorkshire County Cricket Club.

Manchester (Targeted Wards: Moss Side and Whalley Range)

Vision

Young people/local partners will use cricket to engage/unite people from different backgrounds/faiths/communities and support them to come together to increase tolerance, shared values, and commonality. Cricket was used to promote social cohesion by bringing together people who had not previously engaged collectively. The project aimed to be a vehicle for a wider partnership to influence change/create opportunities for different backgrounds/cultures to mix, share time together and increase social cohesion.

Outputs

Manchester	Number of Champions	Total Volunteer Hours	Number of Regular Participants	Number of Regular Sessions	Number of One-off Events	Number One-off Attendees
Year 1	23	124	41	18	5	153
Year 2	45	212	51	96	16	340
End of the programme	59	836	176	230	45	675

Delivery examples

- Sri Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara Educational & Cultural Centre (Sikh) and Gita Bhavan Hindu Temple (Hindu) came together to hold weekly football sessions. The groups that partook in the programme have learnt about each other's cultures, beliefs and differences;
- Coach Development Pathway was launched to upskill young people in Moss Side and Whalley Range and provide some sustainable outcomes to the Breaking Boundaries programme. Sixteen young people have attended the monthly modules focusing on issues such as mental health, coaching in communities, and engaging to reach groups with 14 achieving the qualification;
- Over 90 people attended the Celebration Event held at Denmark Road Sports Centre with a wide range of sporting activities as well as a bungee run, inflatables, and free food and refreshments for everyone that attended. A cricket session was delivered by professional players from Manchester Originals, and there were local organisations such as Be Well offering mental health and wellbeing support.
- Other examples include Families Against Violence (Afro Caribbean) and Whalley Range High School (Pakistani) running new girls football sessions; Friends Sporting Group (Christian) & Whalley Range High School (Muslim) running girls Cricket and Bollywood Dance; and Community Champion Cohesion Education Workshops to discuss local tensions, needs and gain coaching and first aid qualifications.

How Manchester built partnership connections

After a successful City leadership event in Manchester, the Breaking Boundaries team engaged all community organisation leads to come together monthly for social cricket themed get togethers. Each get together involved a cricket themed activity, lunch, and an opportunity for organisations to share their programme views, 'hosted' at a different venue, and background on the work their organisation does.

The first meeting was based at St Edmunds Church with a Christmas theme which involved a talk on the Spirit of Christmas, Christianity, and a tour of the church. The second meeting was held at the British Muslim Heritage Centre which included a tour of the venue and a talk on the contributions of British Muslims to UK society. The get togethers provide an opportunity for organisations to connect better with each other and increase attitudes to diversity by learning about other cultures and religions. These have continued via virtual means during lockdown with good attendance at the two meetings to have taken place.

"I think there's definitely been an increase in trust between the community groups that we're working with at the moment and ourselves. A lot of these groups are sort of hard-to-reach groups. We've built a real strong rapport with some of these groups, to the point where we know we've got their trust now, and some of these groups are continuing to work with us on a local level." **(Community Coordinator, Manchester)**

"I've improved my team working skills, communication, building confidence and leadership skills which I'm using everyday talking to my friends and just by being better in social situations now." **(Community Champion, Manchester)**

Lessons learnt

- Face-to-face meetings, if feasible, tend to be best;
- Capacity/priorities of groups need to be carefully considered to deliver the programme effectively;
- Structure of groups is crucial for them to receive the appropriate funding;
- Listen to the needs of the groups – use this to shape your delivery plan;
- Building relationships – try and keep a dialogue open and check in with partners regularly to build rapport;
- Venue choice is key – any venue must be suitable for activity being delivered, as well as being able to cater for numbers and be relevant to the group you are targeting.

Slough (Targeted Wards: Chalvey, Baylis and Stoke, Britwell, and Wexham)

Vision

The project aimed to deliver a range of fully inclusive opportunities for different communities/ages/genders/disabilities to enjoy cricket and develop social cohesion through coming together through a range of cricket activities and community events/festivals for those who are new to cricket.

Outputs

Slough	Number of Champions	Total Volunteer Hours	Number of Regular Participants	Number of Regular Sessions	Number of One-off Events	Number One-off Attendees
Year 1	41	258	45	126	10	1,307
Year 2	66	518	157	169	26	1,520
End of the programme	92	1784	305	649	56	1,858

Delivery examples

- Partnership working in collaboration with Slough Youth Offending team and a local Grassroots inclusive sport club to bring forward an offer to improve wellbeing through inclusive table tennis known as Polybat for people with disabilities. The session features an hour of supported Polybat at a local space that provides warm food, cakes, coffees and teas for participants. Increased community voice was crucial in the development of this offer. Social mixing also occurs;
- In partnership with She is Someone and Slough Disability Sports Group, Slough has run a six-week project around improved social connectedness. The offer consisted of a dance/movement session to engage disabled South-Asian females who are supported by their parents with the aim of improving attitudes to diversity and increased sense of belonging.
- Other examples included the Ujala Foundation and Wrexham Bowls Club, (Pakistani and White British) offering Women's Bowling, Coffee and a Mosque Visit; Raabia Eden Tournament (Pakistani, White British Indian and Black) a post-curricular tournament for Schools in wards to break down tensions between Schools + Postcodes; and She is Someone, (White British) and Renaissance Readers Group (Pakistani/Indian) offering Women and Girls inclusive dance and socialising opportunities.

How Slough joined previously divergent community groups

The Roma have experienced prejudices from across Slough from native White British and new-native South Asian population. To address this, sessions were scheduled by Chalvey 360 a group representing Roma community and Paving the Way representing the Pakistani community, to bring the two groups together. So far there have been two sessions attended by 39 young people from both groups, they have been partaking in physical activity, planning sessions and eating together.

Fernando and Isa, from C360 (Roma) and Paving the Way (Pakistani) respectively have met each other on a few occasions now but never really communicated without prompts or ice-breaker activities. However, at one recent event they were confident enough to spend lunch together without any prompts, introductions or icebreakers. Staff observed it was just two young males talking about sport, cracking jokes and getting to know each other.

“JJ, a female Hijab wearing young Black person and Community Champion delivered a speech at LETGIRLSPLAY. She said she wrote a letter to her Dad and explained everything whilst offering a compromise to complete a Degree, this worked and she is now a sponsored referee with big goals. As she was speaking to a group of girls from different ethnic backgrounds you could see heads turning and looking at each other to show a real interest in how JJ story could be similar to theirs and how to overcome that situation.” **(Community Coordinator, Slough)**

“I have really enjoyed seeing people come out of their shell, I'm used to doing other voluntary things...I enjoy being part of something and helping to make a difference, helping to organise things, I just enjoy it.” **(Project Lead, Slough)**

Lessons learnt

- Trust young people to lead mapping as they have fantastic anecdotal information of the area;
- Bigger projects are not necessarily better projects. It is best if they are small and precise with outcomes;
- Supporting active social mixing in an informal group setting enables a sense of belonging and confidence to be developed relatively easily. New physical activity opportunities can help foster this as all participants are at a similar level and can learn the new activity together;
- Seeking out existing activities to enhance to have a new focus on cohesion issues is usually a better way forward than creating new activities avoiding the need to find new settings and the set up and marketing needed for newly created activities.

Appendix 4: Programme Management

Project Board

Senior staff at YST and SE are members of a project board with Spirit of 2012 (Spirit) staff (programme funders), and Professor Ted Cattle (expert Community Cohesion advisor) from Belong.²⁷ The project board oversees the management and delivery of the programme, reviewing the progress it is making on a quarterly basis.

Underpinning this, day to day programme management was overseen by the National Programme Manager at YST with strategic direction being provided through the Project Board.

The Project Board was made up of representatives from the following organisations:

- Youth Sport Trust (YST)
- Sporting Equals
- Spirit of 2012
- Belong
- Wavehill

Delivery Structure

Delivery by the Breaking Boundaries programme is undertaken through a four-tier structure:

1. Hosts (local authorities (Barking and Dagenham Council, Bradford Council and Slough Borough Council), Not for Profit Organisations ([MCRactive](#) – Manchester), and cricket foundations ([Edgbaston Cricket Foundation](#) – Birmingham);
2. Community Coordinators supported by Sporting Equals Activators;
3. Community Champions, and;
4. Local Partners and Ambassadors working through a Youth-Led Change team tailored to the needs of each local community.

Each of the five **Hosts** is the accountable body for local delivery, recruiting and line managing a Community Coordinator, leading and managing local stakeholders, establishing and running the Local Delivery Management Group, and setting up a Youth-Led Change Team.

²⁷ [Belong](#) is a charitable organisation that is seeking to be the UK's leading membership organisation (through the Belong Network) on social cohesion and integration.

Community Coordinators (x 5) were originally apprentices (aged 18-25) recruited on an 18-month contract they were expected to lead, with support from their line managers local programme delivery. The original programme plans were for two rounds of recruitment of Coordinators for the programme to employ 10 over its lifetime. Only one of the original Coordinators (Barking), remained with the programme throughout local delivery.

Consultation with city hosts indicated that stronger community cohesion and development was based around relationships and trust at a local level, that enabled connections and partnership working. Consequently, changing the Community Coordinator at 18 months, would have meant re-starting this process. It was agreed at Project Board level that the programme would continue with those currently in post to meet local need replacing staff as vacancies were created.

In total Breaking Boundaries has recruited 14 Community Coordinators across its delivery²⁸.

The coordinator role involved:

- Review and implementation of the local delivery plan.
- Establishing and running a local Youth-Led Change Team to support cohesion and wellbeing outcome delivery and impact;
- Inspiration of others and increasing the confidence of partners, deliverers, participants, and residents to participate in Breaking Boundaries activities; and
- Leading recruitment, engagement, communication, and deployment of a diverse group of Community Champions, supporting the engagement of participants (regular and ad-hoc), and overseeing the sustainability of programme delivery.

Coordinators were also supported by a local Activator employed by Sporting Equals who worked one day a week to help community engagement work and support the recruitment of Community Champions and Ambassadors.

Community Champions were a key component of the programme delivery, enabling a youth-voice to shape and drive programme delivery, underpin the establishment and running of the Youth Led Changes teams, enrol and engage with communities and participants in the targeted areas; and support the delivery of programme activities. The original programme plan was for the recruitment of 500 Champions (100 per City).

The engagement and championing work undertaken by the Community Champions was supported by programme Ambassadors (at least 2 per area) who also were expected to join the Youth-Led Change Team in a City. Ambassadors are expected to champion, advocate and influence communities, partners and key stakeholders to review and undertake delivery on cohesion.

²⁸ Number of Coordinators by City were as follows: Barking 1; Bradford 3; Birmingham 3; Manchester 4; and Slough 3.

Programme delivery is also reliant upon **local partners** who were intended to include a range of voluntary and community organisations including faith groups and places of worship, community centres or youth clubs, schools (mainly Secondary), colleges, and local cricket/sport clubs.

The make-up of the local partners was expected to vary in each area depending on local community resources. Engaging these partners is expected help them with:

- Championing, advocating the programme and influencing communities, other partners, and to work with the programme inspiring community cohesion through cricket; and
- Providing detailed insight from their specific area of expertise to add value and help the Community Champions and Coordinators to make connections and provide local intelligence and contacts for the programme to move forwards.

Appendix 5: Response Rates, Contacts, and Case Studies

Summary of evaluation tasks completed

Research task	Description	Responses / Total	% of those agreeing to interview / % of whole group
Community Coordinators	Baseline telephone survey completed prior to coordinator joining the programme to track general demographics and measures on cohesion, skills, and wellbeing this took place with Coordinators	Baseline: 7/9 Follow up: 7/9	100% /80% 100%/ 80%
Community Champions	Baseline online survey as they join the City Leadership event. Follow up telephone surveys did not take place in in Year 2 because the Champions undertook extremely limited delivery on the programme	Baseline 379/379 Follow up: 38/125	100% 30%/10%
Regular Participants	Initial registration form completed by participants when joining a regular activity and follow up telephone interview with them soon after joining to collect a more detailed baseline position from them. A post participation survey is undertaken by telephone 6-9 months after taking part	Registration: 884/884 Baseline: 125/332 Follow up: 50/80	N/A 38%/38% 40%/6%
Partners and Stakeholders including City Teams	Qualitative telephone interviews were undertaken with contacts supplied by local City teams highlighting organisations they had worked with across the programme	65/75	87%
Case Studies	Case studies were sought from local City teams and YST staff to highlight key aspects and learning from delivery	23/24	96%

Summary of Interview Contacts

Area/Type of Contact	Name/Role of Contact
Standard Contacts per City	Coordinator and Line Manager/s Ambassadors Community Activator Community Cohesion Leads
During the course of the evaluation the following organisations were interviewed:	
Barking and Dagenham	Al-Madina Mosque Barking and Dagenham Tennis Club Barking Abbey School Barking Cricket Club Be Fit Academy Youth Spot Bar TKO Boxing Salvation Army
Birmingham	Sport4Life Living Well The Feast Bhangra Blaze George Dixon Academy Sparkbrook Community Centre
Bradford	The Neighbourhood Resource Centre Bradford College West Bowling Youth Club Karmand Youth Club E:Merge PHAB
Manchester	British Muslim Heritage Centre Gita Bavan Hindu Temple Sri Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara Youth on Solid Ground Friends Sporting Club Families Against Violence Whalley Range High School
Slough	Aik Saath Sri Lankan Youth Association Slough Mitra Mandal SLMYA SWAT Slough Youth Offending Team Paving the Way Ujala Foundation

Summary of completed case studies

Community Champion, Barking and Dagenham

Al Madina Mosque, Barking and Dagenham

Community Coordinator, Barking and Dagenham

New community partnership creation, Barking and Dagenham

Re-establishing community links, Barking and Dagenham

Building community partnerships, Birmingham

Social mixing, Birmingham

Using local cohesion expertise, Birmingham

City leadership forums, Birmingham and Manchester

PHAB, Bradford

Building cohesion skills, Manchester

Peer Role Models, Manchester

New Sporting opportunities, Manchester

Tackling Tensions, Manchester

Partnership building, Slough

Ambassador, Slough

Paving the Way, Slough

Collaborative activity development, Slough

New skills for cohesion delivery, Slough

Ujala Foundation, Slough

Intergenerational cohesion, Slough

Supporting existing activities, Slough

Challenging school stereotypes, Slough

Appendix 6: Defining Community Cohesion

The earliest definition of Community Cohesion arose from review work conducted into inner city riots in England in 2001 (Cantle 2001; Denham 2001) that was taken forward by a joint group led by the Local Government Association (LGA) and published in 2002. The [Guidance on Community Cohesion](#) was published in 2002 and highlights the key essence of the wider understanding of Community Cohesion that, despite a few further iterations (2007 and 2008), still holds in broad terms today.

The LGA document highlights how Community Cohesion seeks to conceptualise cohesive communities in terms that extend beyond consideration of race equality and social inclusion to adopt a broader working definition that focuses on communities as being cohesive where:

- “A common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- The diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued;
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.” (LGA 2002, p.6)

[The Casey Review in 2016](#) offered the most recent step forward in the wider consideration of cohesion in communities and develops a focus on ways in which integration can be enhanced by developing work in areas where the cohesiveness of communities is most challenged.

The focus on integration and the noted ‘call to arms’ by the Casey review to address the issues it raises. This brings a focus on the need to tackle the limited integration between some communities in some parts of the UK that saw it become a key outcome in the Government’s [Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#) published in March 2018. The strategy seeks to address one of the central tenets of the Casey review that where communities’ live lives separate from each other this facilitates a growth in mistrust, anxiety, and prejudice between and within those communities. This, therefore, both the Casey review and Strategy argue needs to be tackled.

The strategy highlights proposals for an approach built around eight key dimensions that provide an important context for the consideration of Breaking Boundaries and the impact it is generating.

The eight dimensions this highlighted to underpin cohesion work including:

1. Strengthening wider leadership to have confidence and the capacity to champion shared values and challenges policies that stand in the way of integration thus fuelling segregation.
2. Supporting new migrants and resident communities to play their full part in society and making the most of socio-economic opportunities where they arise. This coming through improved English language skills, enhanced understanding and knowledge of British life and values, support for refugee integration and developing the capacity of communities to support and adapt to migration.
3. Education for young people that develops an understanding of fundamental British values. Facilitating the mixing of young people with others from different backgrounds to them and ensuring that education contributes to a fostering of integration between different groups.
4. Boosting English Language skills by improving local and national provision of training in this area.
5. Supporting places and communities to foster the coming together of communities of different backgrounds through a range of shared activities which addresses concepts of parallel lives through identifying shared community spaces and other shared activities including sporting and cultural activities that aim to build integration.
6. Increasing Economic Opportunity for all.
7. Protecting rights and freedoms by challenging cultures and practices that harm individuals, restrict rights and hold back individuals.
8. Measuring success through an integration measurement framework and clear identification of learning on what works and seeking to replicate such measures in other areas.

The publication of the Spirit funded report by Belong in August 2020 '[The Power of Sport: Guidance on strengthening cohesion and integration through sport](#)' highlighted further insight on supporting short term outcomes that can demonstrate progress towards improved cohesion in the targeted Breaking Boundaries areas. These include:

- Individuals from different background reporting positive experiences of delivery;
- Attitudes towards others who are different improving;
- Under-represented groups increasing their participation;
- Social and emotional skills of participants increasing;
- Local communities interacting more positively with each other.

Furthermore, the Belong report highlights how cohesion improvements bring benefits through more sustained friendships between different community groups and growth in community feeling and social trust between them as well. These represent areas where Breaking Boundaries can target impact and it did become a main focus of the programme's delivery, particularly in its delivery following the programme's return after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appendix 7: Details of community groupings

Examples of community groupings delivered by City

City	Community Group 1	Targeted Community	Community Group 2	Targeted Community
Barking	Barking Cricket Club	Indian	Goresbrook Cricket Club	White British
	Youth spot bar	White British	B&D Tennis Community Group	Black African
	Al Madina Mosque	Pakistani	The Hive	Black Caribbean
Birmingham	Saheli Women	South Asian	Anawim	White British
	Bhangra Blaze	Pakistani	Bhangra Blaze	Bangladeshi / Gujrati
	George Dixon Academy	White British	Cobden Hotel	Arab
Bradford	Neighborhood Resource Centre	Bangladeshi	British Asian Rugby Association	Pakistani
	Sport Coaching Mentoring Association	Pakistani	Bradford College	Black Caribbean.
	Club Ekta	Indian	Motiv8 College	White British
Manchester	Friends Sporting Club	Christian	Indian Association	Hindu
	Families Against Violence	Afro-Caribbean	Claremount Youth Project	Somali
	Sri Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara Educational & Cultural Centre	Sikh	Gita Bhavan Hindu Temple	Hindu
Slough	Chalvey Community Partnership	Pakistani	Chalvey 360	Roma
	Sri Lankan Youth Association	Sri Lankan	Slough Mitra Mandal	Indian
	Ujala Foundation	Pakistani	Aman Group	Indian

Source: City Implementation Plans – September 2022

Appendix 8: Detailed Approaches to Improve Cohesion Outcomes

In this section we reflect on evaluation findings to provide insight into ways in which cohesion outcomes identified from the Breaking Boundaries programme could be extended.

These are highlighted against each of the six outcome areas and supplement the summaries in Chapter 3:

- Improved social connectedness and attitudes to diversity;
- Increased empowerment and community voice;
- Increased community participation and sense of belonging;
- Improved partnership working;
- Improved wellbeing;
- Improved knowledge and skills to support community cohesion.

Improving social connectedness and attitude to diversity outcomes

This is an opportunity to see further extended outcomes in the area by ensuring that in the earliest programme sessions (through Years 1 and 2) the groups being brought together work to **co-produce** approaches to social mixing to improve connectedness and attitudes to diversity and agreeing group rules. This would have brought greater ownership of the group and activities it provides in addition to the early programme (Years 1 and 2) work through Activation Grants and Local Delivery pot money set aside post pandemic. Though this also needs to be supported through a greater emphasis on guided reflection of these issues in the activity rather than a predominant focus on the activity itself.

Some of the more **conversational approaches** and social interaction seen in delivery in Manchester and Slough where ‘coffee morning style’ group discussions show how this can be achieved.

These discussions used the cricket theme by being based on the social interaction evident through the key role that refreshments play in bringing players together to share their common experiences of the game. In these cases, in activities that ranged from Dance to Archery and in some cricket activities sessions deliberately ended with refreshments and conversation opportunities to build links between participants by sharing joint understanding of their commonalities and challenges. Making this approach a standard element of a Breaking Boundaries approach would bring good benefits in this outcome area.

Work through this approach needs to also have a focus on work to change attitudes to diversity and more extensive use of the **Breaking Boundaries prompt cards** to question and discuss these matters should have been used more frequently. The prompt cards were developed by YST in late 2021 to provide mechanisms to facilitate conversations in activities around cohesion outcomes. Whilst distributed to all Cities their use was inconsistent and needed further reinforcement and perhaps further training in their use to embed them in all delivery.

There could be scope, with the agreement of other participants and co-producing with them an agreed approach to making this happen, to **invite another community group** (for instance in the case of South Asian communities (through Indian, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani groups) if these specific ethnic groups were not already involved to participate in the activity after five to six weeks of delivery to build additional social connections by adding another community group to widen connections being made.

Finally, there is a need to ensure in any future activities of this type that those facilitating sessions actively broker and foster participants to **develop continued connection habits** to ensure the sustainment of the connections and changed behaviour built by the project. There was limited evidence in progress reports and staff/partner interviews that this was happening in project delivery despite prompting from programme management staff at YST and Sporting Equals.

This can build on one of the most consistent outcomes emerging from delivery staff and participant comments in interviews that new friendships with individuals from groups different to them have been developed, although this was not at scale as the example below from project delivery from the coordinator in Manchester highlights:

“There have been many new friendships formed through this particular project. During some of the workshop discussions, conversations were had about local tensions, why sport is important and what it means to be inclusive. This has led to trust being built between the groups and it has developed into a safe space for them to socially mix.” (**Manchester Community Coordinator**)

Improving empowerment and community voice outcomes

For Breaking Boundaries projects to have had a greater outcome in this area, **co-production** work could have focussed upon ways to place greater emphasis on the empowerment dimension, or community voice aspects, that are expected to be delivered in the wider community beyond just a focus on delivery of types of physical activity by Breaking Boundaries projects.

Extending the focus in project development and set up on a specific community outcome or event which acts a **common cause** which has proved to be a useful way forward for some projects to develop this stronger community cohesion aspect and with a regular and sustained focus this could bring more empowerment and voice to such cohesion issues. The sport or physical activity becomes the vehicle by which this is achieved rather than the activity being the end in itself.

For example, in Slough an Activation grant project for Women and Girls enabled participants from Sri-Lankan and Pakistani groups using shared facilities when consulted identified they faced the same issues with anti-social behaviours in a park. However, participants from each of these groups had not previously felt empowered to take things forward. A Breaking Boundaries activity joined them up to create a Basketball activity for females that helped ensure the space was more occupied helping to discourage anti-social behaviour in Manor Park Recreation Ground.

Furthermore, this is an area where concerted effort to foster connection between Breaking Boundaries participants in their **day-to-day lives** beyond the programme could have helped to create greater impact in this area. This could then create a stronger legacy for the programme in the wider community by enabling the connection between participants to support other activities in that community such as other physical activity or other community focussed events like litter picks or other improvement focused approaches.

An emphasis on **facilitating groups to have continued contact** in their everyday lives could have helped build momentum in extending the influence of the groups created through Breaking Boundaries for joint work on asset development in the local communities. This is something that could also be supported by Community Champions developed by the programme and work to support community groups to continue to connect around common causes. This will help embed the connections made through the project to benefit the wider community. It is probably a role for local authority cohesion teams, where they are in place, or perhaps a voluntary community sector organisation with infrastructure to support local community development.

Improving community participation and sense of belonging outcomes

Additional outcomes in this area could be generated through work through a more consistent focus in **co-production** work on specific community outcomes or events in an area where participants have felt powerless or without control or knowledge of how it could be addressed. This then seeks to enhance community assets in ways that can provide more of a legacy than the participation in the community-based activities provided by Breaking Boundaries.

To achieve this, groups must be **supported to understand their commonalities, the parallel lives they lead**, and the common goals that could result from the community asset development they will be seeking to affect. Again, by encouraging connection and contact outside of Breaking Boundaries further extended impacts in this outcome area could be seen. This highlights that once connections between participants were established in the projects there needed to be more focussed work on encouraging these connections to continue beyond the programme and that these could involve specific targeted work to ensure that. It shows that there should have been more focus on this in the way in which the model was delivered in cities.

Extending partnership working

The evaluation findings highlight practice that could help achieve stronger impacts in this outcome area. These include ensuring an approach to partnership working that is **smaller and more targeted** according to the Coordinators and partners we interviewed. Early programme development was focussed on volume rather than quality of partner connections that could be made meaning they faded during COVID-19 because the relationships had not become embedded. It may also have been that the cohort of predominantly younger apprentices didn't have the right skills and confidence to facilitate partnership working and, in some cases, there may have been key partners missing from some CLFs.

The efforts since June 2021 to build more concentrated links with a smaller number of partners could have happened earlier and should be a focus for any future cohesion working. Furthermore, these linkages could have been built around more **specific local community issues** around cohesion with the City teams trusted to take on some of the 'bigger' apparently societal issues like knife crime and gang violence²⁹ as highlighted in Manchester and Slough for example.

Interviews with Coordinators and partners show these issues were raised through the CLF and subsequent discussions City teams had with partners who attended them and these were acting as a helpful goal setting approach. However, they were advised to move onto other issues by the programme team as the remaining period of delivery was seen as too short to see real benefit in this. Ultimately, this has meant that issues of importance that have been identified locally have not been taken forward which has meant, as some interviewees highlighted, that partners felt 'ignored' or not trusted and therefore saw no reason to engage with the programme. This has also, in the evaluators view, limited the outcomes the programme has been able to achieve because issues that could have driven forward programme delivery have not been picked up. Investing time in these like the extended work that Slough has undertaken with the YOT or Roma communities (each taking two-three years to establish) could then have given the programme greater outcome achievement.

²⁹ Fears around this were prevalent in all areas with several young people working with Breaking Boundaries indicating their reticence to attend activities in certain locations because of fears around gang violence and related anti-social behaviour.

Improving wellbeing outcomes

Like other outcome areas such as partnership working and social connectedness, Breaking Boundaries has had relatively more success in achieving these outcomes where it has been more targeted at achievement. In the case of wellbeing, the evaluation findings suggest that to have stronger impacts it may have been better to focus more readily on targets related to **specific dimensions of wellbeing or improved mental health** as these may have been more realistic in relation to the kinds of activities projects were developing. This could also focus on identifying wellbeing issues that are of concern to the partners being worked with and then using this to target activities to address that issue. Though interview evidence also shows that project planning didn't seek to specifically target wellbeing as an outcome when such targeting may have ensured more content that could have helped in this area.

The lack of focus on the expected wellbeing outcomes sought by projects could have been addressed by being reflected in some of the **co-production** work Cities took forward. This could have decided the relevance of this measure to the expected/targeted participants, especially as Spirit funding is focussed upon impacts in terms of improved personal wellbeing. Then agreed ways in which this would be best delivered if seen as applicable. Instead, any focus appeared to be accidental and thus has been one of the weaker outcome area of all for Breaking Boundaries.

Extending knowledge and skills to support community cohesion

Learning from these outcomes shows that Breaking Boundaries could have achieved more by identifying more ways in which its **local community insight** could have been used to support the knowledge development of Coordinators and Champions. An emphasis on this could have been targeting ways in which that insight could be used by local community partners to shape local cohesion work outside of the programme itself.

Although some delivery of this type took place (for example Barking, Manchester, and Slough) there is scope to encourage more where community settings (faith centres, cultural and community centres) are engaged and influenced by programme teams to open their doors for other residents and communities and look at **widening their activity offer** to bring more opportunities for mixing between communities. This extends the influence of the programme beyond just its immediate activities and Coordinators and Champions develop further knowledge and skills in influencing others to change their behaviour and delivery approaches.

The relative success of the CLF events in building more ingrained relationships reported by community partners between them and the City teams and the opening up of new partnership links demonstrates the value of continued engagement with local communities through a programme of similar style events which could help to cement and extend the knowledge and skill development demonstrated through CLFs.

Some Cities have proposed this (Manchester) but without proper organisation and oversight these arrangements may not happen without prompting as was seen when Breaking Boundaries was paused. One route is via the local strategic leads for community cohesion which may exist in a designated cohesion team within a lead partner (Barking, Bradford and formerly Slough) or through other organisation or steering group facility focussed on the strategic challenges and delivery around these issues.

Aligning even more strongly to the **local cohesion strategy**, which Cities took on particularly during their Year 2 delivery and could be further extended will also prove a powerful mechanism through which this could be take forward. Such connections were eventually made by City teams following prompting by the programme management team, but this could have come earlier and a key learning here is that local cohesion teams should be a first point of contact and basis of partnership working at any start of this kind of cohesion project.

Appendix 9: Apprenticeship Knowledge and Skills

The knowledge and skills needed to achieve the apprenticeship standard for the Level 3 Community Sport and Health Officer are shown below.

Area	Knowledge	Skills
The Value of Sport, Physical Activity and Healthy Lifestyle to Community Development	Understanding the importance of physical activity and healthy lifestyles – basic understanding of nutrition, fitness to work, regular daily activity, mental wellbeing	
	What constitutes an effective sport or physical activity programme and how to measure customer satisfaction	
Activating and Empowering Communities	How to understand social barriers and personal motivations of customers to activate local communities	Using local insight and customer-oriented marketing skills to attract high priority groups into existing leisure, parks and sport infrastructure
	Understanding the causes, social determinants and distribution of health inequalities	Successful application of tactics and strategies to empower people from inactive and hard to reach populations to take up an active lifestyle
	How to stimulate positive activities through using experiential play and animation across community assets – this will include how to adapt traditional forms of games and sports as well as utilising fun and adventure to encourage positive interaction	
Behaviour Change	How to initiate meaningful behaviour change based on utilising a strength and asset-based approach	Successful application of a range of approaches that bring about changes in attitudes and behaviours within target communities

Area	Knowledge	Skills
Building and Utilising Relationships	How to work with national governing bodies of sport, county sports partnerships, community organisations, the voluntary sector and sport for development agencies	How to work with national governing bodies of sport, county sports partnerships, community organisations, the voluntary sector and sport for development agencies
	Building partnerships and developing meaningful relationships with local partners, and stakeholders in sport and physical activity	Building partnerships and developing meaningful relationships with local partners, and stakeholders in sport and physical activity
		Demonstrate clear and effective communication techniques in order to give/receive information accurately and in a timely and positive manner
Obtaining Resources	The funding landscape for sport, physical activity, community regeneration, addressing anti-social behaviour and public health	Writing successful bids to enable new, different or more opportunities to take place for sport and physical activity
Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Sport and Physical Activity Programmes	Where to source and how to use customer insight to design sport and physical activity interventions – weekly coaching sessions, social skills groups, volunteering	Managing and adapting personal behaviours to ensure provision is inclusive, customer-focused and accessible
	How to plan programmes of engaging and innovative activities using sport and physical activity	Supporting people within target communities to become involved in the preparation, planning and delivery of sport and active lifestyles
	How to use information technology to monitor and evaluate programmes in order to measure impact and capture outcomes	Problem solving and effective decision making with regards to the design and implementation of sport and physical activity programmes
Community Safety	The fundamental principles of safeguarding, child protection and working with vulnerable adults	Managing disruptive behaviour of clients and customers before, during and after activities
	The fundamental principles of first aid in a community sport environment	

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