

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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**An evaluation of the charitable  
& community activities of Sheffield City Trust**

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**REPORT 2: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT**

**December 2022**



Submitted to:  
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This report has been prepared by the Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) at Sheffield Hallam University. The report has been commissioned by SCT but does not necessarily represent the views of Sheffield City Trust (SCT). The views expressed within this report represent those of the authors.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

### **Who are Sheffield City Trust and what do they do?**

The diversity, scope and reach of Sheffield City Trust (SCT) makes this a tricky question to answer in a concise way. The diversity of what SCT deliver and support is vast. It ranges from the management of Sheffield's high profile leisure facilities, to supporting the smallest of community groups. The ways in which SCT empowers community groups and organisations ranges from support with grant funding and facility provision, to capacity building, to outreach work in communities, and the provision of operational and strategic advice and guidance. Whilst the common assumption (and public perception) is that SCT's role is to provide venues and opportunities for local people to get active, the reach of the organisation goes much further. SCT's primary objective 'to bring physical health and wellbeing to the people of Sheffield' involves challenging inequity.

During COVID, the Sheffield City Trust Community Team carried out immersive engagement and consultation with the community. As a result of this, the Community Team put forward a new approach to community engagement, which was approved by the Trust. This approach sought to be innovative, community led and visibly engaging, working with communities in a very different way. The work of the Community Team is focused on developing relationships with some of the most disenfranchised and disadvantaged communities in the city.

### **Community Team clarity of purpose and vision**

The purpose of the Community Team is to "...assist local communities to have the opportunity to access resource to make their lives better". The role of the trust goes way beyond sport and physical activity goals, aiming to tackle inequalities and improve overall quality of life. During the pandemic lockdowns, the Community Team provided direct support to foodbanks and community organisations supporting disadvantaged families. The SCT Community Team Summer Programme continues this approach as the provision of food and drink is integral to their approach to engage local people.

SCT Community Team shares a future vision for: *"...a fairer and more inclusive Sheffield, where communities are in control of their own destiny. Thousands of children and families in the most deprived and in need areas of Sheffield are well fed and safe enough in their local community to not only do things that they enjoy but create new things they can enjoy."*

### **How does Sheffield City Trust's Community Team operate?**

The Community Team's ethos focuses on providing support and empowering communities. Changing the way that people think and creating a sustainable system of development are key aims. The SCT Community Team describe their way of working as 'bottom up' and, true to this, their approaches are clearly person-centred. This approach is one of several approaches SCT take to fulfilling their charitable purposes. The Community Team describe their desire to "truly enable communities to access what they need, and come up with their own changes, giving them the power and influence to make their lives better." The focus is on supporting communities to develop, lead and deliver their own plans and changes based on local need, not to decide what is needed for them.

*“It is acknowledged that many communities in Sheffield have been on the wrong end of resource allocation in recent history. This has bred distrust and cynicism of organisations and initiatives that are not led by and/or developed in the (and by the) community. This was context we could not ignore and had to contend with whilst being as positive as possible. Our approach was to really listen to communities and develop relationships with them. We had to be able to act on what they wanted where possible and be open and transparent where this wasn’t. Our approach was completely bottom up, moving at the pace of communities.” - Rob Womack, SCT Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships Manager*

*“Don't think you just know all the answers...The engagement and insight from each local area is important, not having a blueprint of this works.” – Dale Dennett, SCT Community Team*

*“SCT have been a backbone for us over the past three years. They’ve opened doors and built bridges, by providing wrap-around support.” Safiya Sayeed, Reach up Youth.*

SCT’s Community Team doesn’t follow a written development strategy / action plan because their activities and delivery are community driven and constantly evolve. In essence their strategy is determined by what the community want and need and SCT explore ways to make this happen. SCT acknowledge that they are playing “a long game” as delivery of their objectives requires major systemic change and enabling people to think and work differently takes time to achieve.

SCT’s ‘New Beginnings’ plan produced in 2020 sets out their ethos and vision for change: *“The Community Team will encourage (in partnership with others) ongoing community cohesion and work with community leaders that will engage them and other like-minded partners. The Community Team will increase involvement, identify, and reach out to the marginalised and sub-cultures within local communities.”*

Collaborative working through partners (new and existing), effective utilisation of technology, school outreach, coach education, and improved monitoring and evaluation are all target areas. There is a strong recognition that many people don’t use SCT venues because “we don’t provide what they want or what we do provide doesn’t quite appeal to them.” Sometimes the best way to address this might be to concentrate efforts on appealing to a broader range of people, and at other times it might be to provide opportunities in a different way (e.g. within communities, supporting local organisations to expand delivery, cross-sector working). SCT adopt both these approaches in their aim to reach and engage more people.

## 2.0 UNDERSTANDING THE TYPE, SCALE AND REACH OF DELIVERY

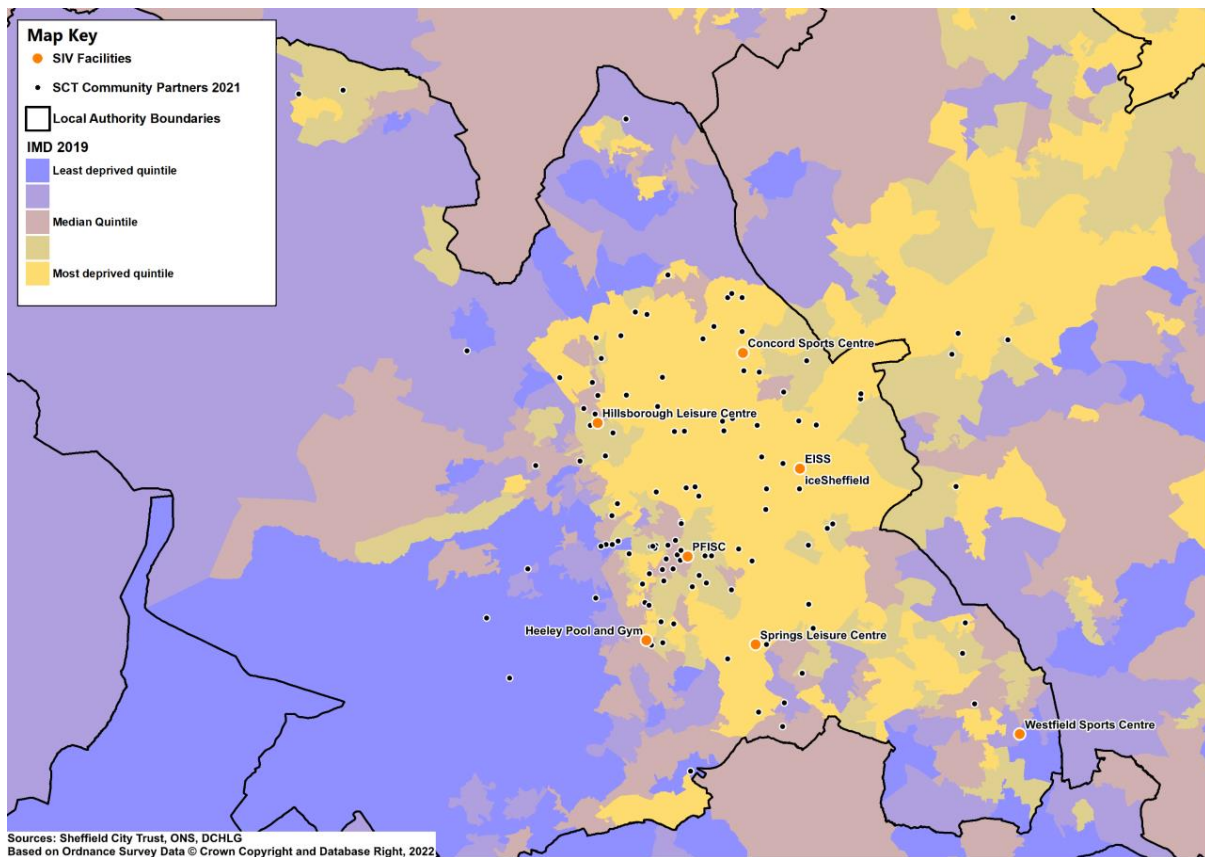
Based on 2021 data, SCT work with 182 community partners. Table 2.1 below focuses on just four of these partners and summarises the type of support provided and the difference that this makes. These projects were selected to provide a few different examples of diversity and varied types of working (from the vast range which is supported). They include: linking physical activity with existing health and wellbeing programmes; targeted activity provision to less engaged communities; addressing inequalities and increasing inclusion; supporting the health service and promoting healthy lifestyles; and tackling skills and training gaps for young people to enhance employability.

**Table 2.1 Summary of four of SCTs partners**

Organisation	Support	Impact
SOAR (Community organisation)	Strategic partnership with a Memorandum of Understanding in place to support a range of joint activities, including broader health programmes	Exercise is embedded into health and wellbeing programmes. SOAR promote activities to their community
Park Hill Residents' Association	Joint working to provide local activity opportunities for children and families at Ponds Forge and in community facilities	Participation broadened, engaged people with social anxiety, community cohesion enhanced
Trans Active	Working with Sheffield Health and Social Care to bring transgender people together to participate in physical activity opportunities	Co-produced transgender policy, funding attracted (£40k), sustainable group formed and supported
Street League	Partnership working and venue provision to engage 16-24 year olds and support them with employability, through skills, training and advice	Over 300 young people supported with 90+ people experiencing positive employability outcomes

Figure 2.1 below shows the coverage of SCT's community partners across the whole of the city, with a strong focus on provision in the most deprived parts of Sheffield.

**Figure 2.1 Map of SCT's community partners**



As described at the onset, the role of SCT is wide and varied. Delivery is multi-faceted and doesn't fit neatly into the boxes in Table 2.2 below e.g. young people may be engaged in numerous ways via schools, community sessions, family activities or via a targeted session. However, the descriptions which follow (Table 2.3) help to bring to life some of the work of SCT and explain the approaches and ways of working. The themes and range of functions below, in Table 2.2 and Figure 2.2 have been determined by the evaluation team and are not set headings under which SCT operate.



**Table 2.2 Summary of SCTs themes of work**

Theme / area of work	Examples of how SCT engage and support these areas
Schools / education	Sponsorship schemes to reward attendance, behaviour or achievement. 'School of the Week' incentive programme. Grant funding to deliver food and physical activities within school holidays and after-school. Support for SSPs to improve provision in deprived areas. Volunteering opportunities for A-level students. Providing a range of PE activities and swimming lessons for home schooled children and those not in the mainstream system.
Community engagement	Wide ranging funding and support to develop networks within communities and build awareness and trust. Programme delivery at events and provision of sessions, providing strategic support and upskilling. Partners include: Manor and Castle Development Trust, Reach Up Youth, Ship Shape and Zest.
Place-based locality support	Locality-based delivery based on community need e.g. Burngreave, Darnall, Flowers Estate. Working with and supporting existing community organisations e.g. TARA and Family Action on the Flowers Estate to provide a range of fitness and ICT activities.
Active Aging	Supporting organisations to provide opportunities for active aging through venue hire, delivery and funding e.g. Age UK, Drink Wise Age Well (a walking football and walking netball offer), and the NHS's Falls Prevention Service to incorporate SCT into the Falls pathway in Sheffield.
Health service / health care (NHS / CCG)	Joined up working with local NHS services and the Sheffield CCG. Support has been provided to the Back Pain Service, Burngreave Surgery (delivering fitness classes and activities in the surgery gym), Diabetes Prevention Programme, and Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehab Programmes via support of exercise referral schemes. SCT are working with Weston Park Hospital to develop a service Level Agreement (SLA) that will see a variety of events and delivery to generate charitable funds.
Health / charity organisations	Grant funding, activity provision, venue hire and other necessary support for targeted health organisations e.g. Alopecia Support Group, Firth Park Men's Group, Macmillan Cancer Support, Sheffield Colon Cancer Support Group, MS Society and Mind Sheffield. SCT work in partnership via SPARS provider group and the Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) practitioners.
Widening participation (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion EDI)	Participate in quarterly meetings with Sheffield Disability Network driving the city-wide agenda for disability sport. Supporting Disability Sheffield and other disability groups (Sheffield Cycle for All, Paces School for Conductive Education, City Knights), with funding, guidance and in-kind donations. Supporting the inclusive delivery of physical activity e.g. Autism Plus, Trans Active. Targeting under-represented groups and understanding cultural and other barriers e.g. African Caribbean Society, Asylum Seekers Centre, ISRAAC.
Families	Supporting organisations including Heeley City Farm, Galeed House (a local Roma family service provider), Family Support Group and Flowers Estate Family Action to provide physical activity opportunities and link to wider support such as the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.
Health, wellbeing, and lifestyle support	Let's Cook Ltd - working together to deliver a range of learn to cook activities and training for children and volunteers across Sheffield, working with Shed Vending to create nutritional programmes and trialling new vending machines in venues
Cross-sector collaboration	SCT undertake diverse cross-sector working with a variety of organisations such as Rocca Creative (trailing a range of tech based solutions to improve

	<p>physical activity), Sanctuary Housing (a project to over 5,000 homes), Sheffcare (improving physical activity in care homes), Sheffield Futures (supporting young unemployed people), South Yorkshire Police, The Bare Project (musical programme for young people from NEET (not in education, employment or training) background, partnered through the HAF (Holiday activities and food) project), Fairshare (tackling holiday hunger initiatives).</p>
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**Figure 2.2 SCT's range of functions:**



Table 2.3 SCT logic model

LOGIC	ACTIVITIES / PROCESS	OUTPUTS	INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES	LONGER TERM OUTCOMES
<u>Rationale and aims</u>	<u>What is happening / will be happening?</u>	<u>Deliverables from the activity</u>	<u>Measured changes and results</u>	
<b>Challenging societal inequalities and improving inclusion</b> through community engagement we will improve standards of living and broaden access for all. Basic needs should be met before or part of a physical activity offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support for inclusion / disability / para-sport organisations (e.g. Autism plus, Steelkings, PACES, Disability Sheffield)</li> <li>- Inclusive practice embedded into SCT policies and processes</li> <li>- Make leisure centres and facilities more attractive, venue-based outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved, more accessible provision ('plus 1' policy)</li> <li>- New SCT trans policy</li> <li>- SCT hosts 40% of UK's para-ice hockey</li> <li>- Targeted / bespoke provision for community groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broadened access to opportunities (regardless of culture / religion / identity)</li> <li>- Communities are fed</li> </ul>	<b>Reduced inequalities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A fairer, more inclusive city</li> <li>- Improved quality of life</li> <li>- Greater engagement in sport and PA by disabled people - creating increased health/social benefits.</li> <li>- Sustainable disability sports clubs, providing access and opportunities</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 200 people received support</li> </ul>		
<b>Support for community health care and active aging organisations</b> helps to reduce the need for costly medical care and provides mental health and wellbeing support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supporting health improvement programmes (e.g. Different Strokes, Community Wellbeing Service, Macmillan Cancer Support, NHS Back Pain services, Diabetes, Mental health)</li> <li>- Providing support to active aging partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase in physical activity participation— more people, more often, greater diversity</li> <li>- Physical activity benefits experienced (social, health, education, individual development)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved pathways from hospital to community care</li> <li>- Lower demands for health and social care due to PA and social benefits</li> </ul>	<b>Individual and economic development outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health care savings are generated by reducing the burden on the health and social care systems.</li> </ul>

<p>SCT has an aim to be <b>‘present and accessible to all Sheffield schools through engagement and programmes’</b>. Providing young people with positive experiences of physical activity will help to build lifelong enjoyment of being active</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work in partnership to improve education, skills, and employability</li> <li>- Engagement with education providers including primary and secondary schools, plus home school and those not in the mainstream system</li> <li>- Family opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved education and training e.g. community leader education programme</li> <li>- Positive experiences of physical activity for young people – reward vouchers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved employability e.g. 30% for Street League</li> <li>- Schools provide an enhanced physical activity offer, including extra-curricular and holiday provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A greater proportion of young people enter training and / or employment</li> <li>- Young people experience health and social benefits through greater engagement in physical activity</li> </ul>
<p><b>Working in partnership with communities</b> helps to build relationships and enable and empower change. Venue-based outreach work helps to connect and enthuse. Supporting existing organisations to develop and grow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliver charitable events and initiatives</li> <li>- Support community infrastructure need</li> <li>- Community visits and engagement to create person-centred delivery</li> <li>- Identify funding and resources</li> <li>- Delivery within community venues in partnership with local people / groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SCT has an established place at the heart of decision-making within Sheffield</li> <li>- 182 organisations are given grant funding and support</li> <li>- Improved relationships and connectivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bringing communities together generates health and social benefits</li> <li>- Provision is ‘bottom up’ / led by the community</li> <li>- Prioritise outcomes that matter to communities and gain trust</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community empowerment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communities are in control of their own destiny</li> <li>- Sustainable and empowered groups and pathways (resource re-directed to support priorities)</li> </ul>

### 3.0 THE DIFFERENCE MADE

To showcase the impact that SCT has on the communities it engages with, the evaluation team focussed on four case studies which highlight the work SCT do with some of their community groups and partners. Below are a few excerpts from interviews the evaluation team conducted with various stakeholders within these organisations and community groups. For further detail of these stories please see the full case studies.

#### Reach up Youth

Reach up Youth was founded in 2013 by local resident Safiya Saeed, who was committed to improving the prospects of young people in Burngreave through providing positive opportunities. Sheffield City Trust (SCT) has supported Reach up Youth since 2016. The two organisations have worked together to instigate changes to policy, to widen understanding of what is needed to better support young people, and to empower communities and organisations to think and act differently.

*“If you have met Safiya, there is no better person. Her energy, her passion, her constant being is unrivalled by anyone I have ever met in my entire life. The young people are her family and the respect they have for her is unbelievable.” - Kathryn Mudge, Yorkshire Sport Foundation.*

The scope and impact of Reach up Youth is impressive. The weekend sessions regularly cater for over 35 young people, with 20 attending the mid-week sessions. In total, this has generated over 2,000 attendances over the past 12 months. The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme supported a further 200 local people. Over the past year, 40 young people have been involved in the mentoring / leadership programme, with 12 people commencing training and / or employment opportunities. The understanding, knowledge and awareness generated helps to address the lack of positive role models.

SCT has provided help and support to Reach up Youth with bid writing to support community development, strategic support, longer term funding and capacity and confidence building. The HR team has provided support with recruitment and helped SCT to enhance their visibility and profile as an empowering youth organisation within Sheffield.

*“SCT have been a backbone for us over the past three years. They’ve opened doors and built bridges, by providing wrap-around support.” - Safiya Sayeed, Reach up Youth.*

As part of this reciprocal relationship, Reach up Youth has provoked change within SCT. RUY feel that their input has led to widened inclusive practice, with venues feeling more welcoming and accessible, more diverse representation, and improved employment policies. SCT has been able to connect to a more diverse audience, as well as gaining a better understanding of the third sector. However, SCT do recognise this is the view of one valued community partner, and that there is much more work to be done in this area to reflect the views of other individuals and organisations across the city.

Individuals, relationships, and commitment are key to the success of this partnership. Safiya Sayeed (RUY) and Rob Womack and David Bly (SCT) have been fundamental to establishing and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship. They truly care about the cause, tirelessly champion for change, and work long unsociable hours to ensure the success and future sustainability of Reach Up Youth.

*“SCT have done some great things [supporting RUY], they have learnt from what they have done and taken time to listen and understand people.” - Kathryn Mudge, Yorkshire Sport Foundation (YSF).*

## **Street League**

Street League is a national organisation that works to support young people (16-24 year olds) by raising aspirations, and progressing individuals into education, training and employment. The 15-week programme provides sporting activities combined with opportunities to enhance functional and personal development skills, improve Maths and English, gain work experience and work towards qualifications.

Street League and SCT have a collective vision and shared ethos and values. They are both committed to tackling inequalities and to move people towards more positive destinations. Street League sessions are hosted at SCT’s elite site ‘English Institute of Sport Sheffield’ (EISS). Both organisations saw the venue and its prestige as a significant positive draw that would help to attract the target audience. The sessions offer sporting opportunities and the chance to be part of the ‘Academy’ which provides educational skills / training and social games.

Since early 2015, Street League has grown from two members of staff to four. They have worked with over 645 young people from the Sheffield City Region and supported 455 young people into employment, education, or training. This is a 71% conversion rate from the Academy and street sport programmes. SCT are described as a major part of Street Leagues’ development and the two organisations have nurtured a strong partnership which benefits both organisations.

For Street League, the benefits of collaborating with SCT include the use of elite venues, promotion of their name and brand at these venues, and the provision of advice, guidance, support, and employment opportunities for participants. The partnership also provides the opportunity for participants to get involved in wider sporting opportunities through SCT and train at different venues, and to broaden their network.

*“[SCT] also support us with work placements, interview skills and techniques. We do mock interviews with staff from here (EISS) and facilitate any employability skills that are needed. [We] will look at CVs, work placements, and some young people have moved into work here.”*  
– Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League

SCT derive benefits through supporting young people, understanding the barriers and challenges faced, and strengthening connections:

*“We empower the programme through hosting it and showing the young people we connect with them, further progressing their trust in wider society. The insight is two way.... [The] legacy is through employment - we have seen some good success stories in the young people coming to work for SCT, which benefits us as an organisation and also benefits Street League.”*  
– David Bly, Sports Programme and Engagement Manager - SCT

Both organisations aspire to develop this partnership further and to continue to innovate and drive positive change. They have several programmes in the pipeline which they are working on together, linking up their contacts and networks within communities to avoid duplication.

*“Street League are looking to explore these opportunities further with SCT so that there is a sporting offer available following their job centre appointments.” - Graeme Severn, Operations Manager – Street League.*

### **Community Team Summer programme**

SCT’s community delivery is led by three full time members of staff within the larger Community Team: Rob Womack, Uri Rennie, and Dale Dennett. The team have spent years creating strong relationships within local communities. Through listening and engaging with local people, the Community Team provide support to help with basic needs. In 2022, the community asked for free, hyper-local activities and food for children. This insight-driven, community-led approach led to the idea of the using a Sports Van as the hook in the Summer Programme. The SCT Community Team’s delivery in the summer is via the means of sports vans, which provide young people and their families with a regular mixture of sports, activities, food, and drink. The full-time staff work alongside six casual Summer Programme Officers who are employed throughout the summer holidays. They run a six-week programme of activities in various parks and communities throughout Sheffield, particularly targeted in deprived areas.

The nature of the Summer Programme is purposefully ad hoc – the sessions are designed and developed by the community on the day. This level of flexibility and ability to adapt by the Community Team is crucial to the effective running of the community engagement project. Not having a rigid, structured plan with set activities provided the freedom to tailor activities to the environment and those who were present on the day. This approach ensured that the activities met the needs and preferences of the participants.

Over the six weeks of delivery, the Community Team delivered 23 sessions per week (130+ sessions) across 19 targeted areas within the City. The Summer Programme engaged more than 1,600 individuals generating a total of 5,325 visits / engagements with the sessions. Due to the community engagement work, the vans were extremely successful in engaging participants and families from ethnic minority backgrounds (with 62% from ethnic minority groups) and males (with 68% of participants male). There was significant variance in attendance by site, ranging from 43 attendances at one site over the six-week period, to 814 at another – with the peak attendance at a single session reaching 120 people (and the lowest attendance being one person).

*“The summer school holidays can be an expensive time, especially this year when prices are rising so much. Lots of families can’t easily afford paid summer camps or sports clubs. That’s why the community team’s summer programme at the Ponderosa was so valuable. The sessions were free, inclusive, and genuinely for all. It was wonderful to see so many kids and families coming together to take part in games and activities or just to sit and have a picnic. It also showed the enormous importance of providing free food at the activities. Providing free food fuels up the kids and helps family budgets. Thank you to the team for all of your work this summer.” **Tom Hunt, Elected Member for Walkley.***

## Disability sport

When the Sport England funding for Activity Sheffield's disability sport offer came to an end in 2018, SCT committed to continue and develop this valuable work. SCT commenced hosting and funding a new Disability Officer post for one day per week. The core aim of the role was to coordinate disability sport in the city and act as a point of contact for disabled sports clubs in Sheffield. In addition to this, providing leadership for the Sheffield Disability Network meetings and events, championing inclusive practice and supporting of the wider disability network, and encouraging greater integration and partnership / cross-sector working and funding were part of the remit.

Dawn Wood was successfully recruited into the Officer role and brought with her a wealth of experience working in local disability sport, accumulated from her teaching roles and working within Sheffield's School Sports Partnership.

*"I think her (Dawn's) links and the people she knows has been massive because without Dawn having that link to some of these groups, we probably wouldn't have had the opportunity to get into some of these groups, so it's enabled us to do that and she's been influential in setting a lot of those groups up." – Gareth Hayden, SCC*

As part of Dawn's work with SCT, she has been influential in setting up the Disability Sport Network, which has been developed to progress disability sport and activity at a local level.

*"Ultimately people are around the table and have attached themselves to the Network because Dawn is involved. She's infectious." – Tom Hughes, YSF.*

The network meets three times per year in a coordination and facilitation role, and to help build and strengthen partnerships. It is responsible for identifying funding opportunities and bid writing, providing information and support to establish new groups and clubs, as well as coordinating networking opportunities, marketing, and training for volunteers. There is also an Annual Celebration Event hosted at English Institute of Sport Sheffield (EISS). One day is for adults and one day for children with around 250 people attending each day over a weekend. Coaches from a variety of sports travel from across the country to be a part of the event and often offer up their time and deliver activities for free. This enables participants to take part in new activities and sports and see what the city and disability sport has to offer.

Hosting and positioning the Disability Officer role within SCT has created greater freedom, less onerous paperwork and a reduction in red tape to negotiate. It enables the work that Dawn does to be organic and develop where the conversations are happening and where the energy is. As a result, things happen more quickly and spontaneously which, when it comes to voluntary organisations and funding opportunities, is often needed.



## Summary of impact

Relationships between SCT's Community Team, community organisations and individuals within the community have been built up over many years. The work of SCT has resulted in significant benefits for local communities which are outlined through the examples below. For further detail of these stories please see the full case studies.

The work of the Community Team has helped to **raise aspirations** within the local community. Examples of this include the SCT partnership with Street League, a national charitable organisation that supports 16-24yr olds in deprived areas of Sheffield, and via Reach up Youth, a local community-led organisation that is based in the Burngreave area of the city:

*"The venue helps young people to raise their aspirations and motivation as they are seeing, not only elite athletes day in, day out from a number of able bodied and disability sports, but just general day to day people who work there, from reception staff, maintenance staff to sports staff. This helps us to engage with our young people and break down their barriers to employment, education and training."* – Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League

*"I get so much support with my studies and life advice, they (RUY and SCT) are always there for me. I don't think they could do any more to support me. Safiya is so great, she is always there for us, she is more like an auntie or second mum to us all and David Bly and Tez – I know that if I ever needed anything, even outside of work, they would be there for me."* – Reach up Youth leader and SCT employee.

In addition, the SCT Community Team provide community groups with resources such as venue hire at discounted prices which help these organisations to **run events and deliver activities** which otherwise wouldn't be possible. An example of this is the annual disability event which is run in September at EISS. Dawn the Disability Officer at SCT has been instrumental in creating this opportunity.

*"She's [Dawn] been influential with people like David Bly from SCT, talking about the event with them and enabling us to give it at a reduced rate so we can make it affordable to people who come and attend. She's influenced that but SCT have supported in making some of that happen, and continue to do so, and without that it wouldn't be possible."* – Gareth Hayden, SCC.

The events which are delivered at the SCT venues **help people in the local community to find new and different activities.**

*"She [participant at the annual celebration event] absolutely loved it and she's now playing for the Eagles wheelchair team but without having that there (the opportunity to play Rugby at the celebration event) she would never have tried wheelchair rugby and never had that opportunity to take part. And obviously now she's going from strength to strength."* Gareth Hayden, SCC

The Community Team have also provided discounted rates for their venues for Street League which means the **programme and events** they put on can run, which in turn **helps the local community be active and helps raise funds for other charitable organisations.**

*“SCT has always been an active partner in our networking tournament, Street League and partner’s Champions Cup. They [SCT] help with the tournaments (hosted at EISS and Ponds Forge) and are always great with donating raffle prizes etc. At one of those tournaments, we raised £550 for Macmillan Cancer Support.” – Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League.*

SCT’s provision of venues provides **new opportunities** for local people to take part in. For the Street League programme, using SCT’s venues and building relationships with the SCT staff has enabled their participants to be trained to use the different facilities, has widened their access to different sports and activities and created an enhanced experience.

*“All of the guys have had gym inductions so [that’s] another option for us to use rather than using courts etc.” – Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League.*

*“We have done ice-skating and climbing as bonding activities before the academy programme starts to help motivate and inspire (the participants).” – Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League.*

The use of SCT venues has impacted on the people involved through help and **support with employment, volunteering and training opportunities**, as illustrated through the Community Team’s work with Street League participants.

*“[SCT] also support us with work placements, interview skills and techniques. We do mock interviews with staff from here (EISS) and facilitate any employability skills that are needed. [SCT] will look at CVs, work placements, and some young people have moved into work here.” – Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League.*

In some cases, this has led to **employment opportunities** for young people in the community which in turn has led to **improved confidence** and **communication skills** and obtaining **qualifications**.

*“[We] went to EISS to have a look around in 2018/2019. David Bly showed us around and we had an induction. Then one day we got asked to cover a basketball session at EISS. Then a couple of weeks after I was invited to an interview then offered a job as a basketball coach. That’s how it started but it has slowly built up.... I coach athletics, football, kids camp in summer all sorts, I’m there quite a lot. Obviously, RUY and SCT have a good relationship but it shows if you are willing and open to it, it can happen...Tez, my supervisor, has been really supportive. I get so much support with my studies and life advice, they (RUY and SCT) are always there for me. I don’t think they could do any more to support me.*

*“They [SCT] helped me build my confidence up, they helped me get my sports coaching qualification.” – Former Street League participant and SCT employee.*

*“She [Street League participant] initially did a work placement here [EISS] and really impressed the staff. A casual / coach role came up and [she] was encouraged to apply for it. She’d always had an interest in sports coaching.” – Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League.*

Another way the staff within the Community Team has positively impacted on community groups and partners is by providing them with advice and knowledge of **funding opportunities**. This advice helps

to **enhance experiences** that the local community are given, as well as providing **new and different opportunities** for participants. Examples of this include the work that Dawn the Disability Officer at SCT has done in connection with DanceStars and Cycle Happy, two volunteer-led clubs for young people with physical and learning disabilities.

*“When I met Dawn she said ‘Well, you should go for this funding and what about this and how about you expand the group’. She worked with me to get that Awards for All application and what she also managed to do for us was she exposed our group to all sorts of different activities.”* - Community club volunteer.

The funding has provided the group with opportunities to try **new and different sports** such as swimming, as well as flexibility to **promote** and **diversify their offer** to include a drama element.

*“When we got the funding and we really started promoting it, we were able to offer free dance classes and vouchers for swimming...we got t-shirts which the kids designed. It really took off. We also run a drama group, actually on the success of funding from the dance group, we set up a drama group.”* - Community club volunteer (Dance Stars).

*“It gives our kids the opportunity to try different activities, indoors and outdoors, things that they probably wouldn't try or have the confidence to try.”* - Community club volunteer (Dance Stars).

*“I'm not a sports club person, I cycle but running a sports club was not in my blood. Dawn could see my enthusiasm though and she's helped and guided me every step of the way. Without that chance meeting with Dawn none of this would have happened, she has a true understanding of our young people, and she has empowered me to be creative.”* - Community club volunteer (Cycle Happy).

The Community Team staff provide community groups and partners with **knowledge of and connection to local organisations and networks**. This local knowledge helps to build other networks and foster greater integration which in turn can create meaningful, impactful relationships which can bring about opportunities such as volunteering for the young people involved.

*“It [Being in SCT venues / speaking to SCT staff] allows us to interact with different elite NGB's, education and other organisations which helps to build the Street League networks. It has also led to us supporting other organisations with volunteering from our young people.”* – Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League

*“Dawn goes into schools and gets to know families very well, she has signposted many of our members to us.”* - Community club volunteer

The partnership between Street League and SCT's Community Team over the last seven years has helped to develop a strong relationship between the two organisations. These organisations have a lot in the pipeline and have meetings scheduled with other organisations to help to **join up working** which in turn helps to avoid duplication of effort. SCT has a strong ethos and commitment to be **community-led** and to **listen** and **respond** to community needs, **empowering** people to work together and enhance opportunities.

*“We [Street League] are looking to explore these opportunities [with DWP] further with SCT so that there is a sporting offer available following their job centre appointments.”- Graeme Severn, Operations Manager – Street League*

*“SCT have done some great things [supporting RUY], they have learnt from what they have done and taken time to listen and understand people.” - Kathryn Mudge, Yorkshire Sport Foundation.*

*“We are proud that our programmes are part of SCT...It is much more than the academy and use of facilities. We want to continue the relationship building year on year and keep innovating” - Graeme Severn, Operations Manager – Street League.*

## 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SCT's Community Team work in a flexible way to enable organic growth. Employees within this team have a vision but not a set of rigid work programmes. They know where they want to get to, but the route to get there will be co-created with the community and might evolve over time. There is sometimes an element of serendipity, and meeting with the right people and being part of important conversations helps to position SCT in such a way that they can influence change within communities. Much of the Community Team's work takes a place-based approach, e.g. targeted community support in Darnall and Burngreave, or focuses on taking activities into communities e.g. the summer programme using the sport vans. The principles very much align with some of the national investment in tackling inequalities and changing behaviour using physical activity as a tool, such as Sport England's support of Local Delivery Pilots to instigate systems change and place-based working.

At an organisational level, SCT do not appear to have a clear set of objectives across all areas and their remit is broad and evolving. Within this, the Community Team form their objectives around the priorities of the communities with which they support. Their focus is to deliver what the community want and need – which of course differs across the city and is subject to regular change. The flexible ways of working within the Community Team enable them to act quickly with funding and other forms of help / support for organisations – when working with local, community-based groups time is often of the essence and this flexibility can be crucial.

A major aim of SCT is to make community facilities welcoming, accessible, and community focused. Much has been done to change perceptions of 'sport and leisure' facilities to make them feel like more of a community space that 'people like me' can access and enjoy. The Community Team stated their aspirations to do much more in terms of improving diversity and representativeness, and making venues more welcoming, and so this remains 'work in progress'. However, several interviewees commended the substantial improvements that have been made regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion over recent years. A lack of diversity in SCT's management and policy teams was highlighted by staff within the Community Team, however there is a desire to strive to become more representative and inclusive.

At the heart of SCT's Community Team is a commitment to 'serving' communities. The work of the team is community driven and focuses on empowering people and building sustainable relationships. They aim to 'listen first and gain trust' and integrate themselves into local ways of working, not to be seen as people who are 'parachuting in'.

*"We were sure to engage and hear a diverse range of voices and reach right into the hearts of communities, seeking to hear those most marginalised. We have purposefully sought to distance ourselves from other programmes and initiatives within the city in order to create separation and give ourselves the opportunity to be different and new." – Community Team Summer Programme Full Report.*

The ultimate question for the impact evaluation is 'what difference does this all make?' Although not easy to summarise in metrics, there is no doubt that the Community Team's way of working and driving positive change is having an impact, as identified by the case studies and the many testimonies in this report.

The team do not collect routine data or try to measure their 'impacts' via traditional measures of success, their priority is to ensure that any data collection is beneficial to support learning, rather than as a way to measure 'performance'. Moreover, some interviewees felt that data collection could be counterproductive and could go against the principles of community engagement (particularly at certain times as it could adversely affect the process of developing trust and building relationships and credibility). Any insight gathering is done in sensitive and appropriate ways to benefit local communities.

The insight and feedback generated through this study highlighted that some groups would struggle to operate at all without SCT support, and others wouldn't have been formed without it. If SCT operated solely on a commercial basis then many community organisations would struggle to access facilities, and some wouldn't have the support to grow and develop without these relationships in place.

If SCT's key driver was financial performance and it catered solely for the 'engaged active' customers (via pathways and programmes), where would that leave those who might become motivated / interested but who encounter barriers to getting active? There is often not an easy business case / commercial argument for making this type of investment, as it requires more time and is an intensive process of engaging, building trust, and handholding. 'New' participants might need different settings? a new programme? a new format of delivery? different messages or approaches? additional support (venue, instructor, guide, buddy, equipment, adaptation)? – this all takes a significant amount of time, persistence, and investment. It is to the credit of SCT that their aim is to create and shape opportunities for everybody in Sheffield and break down some of the barriers that make it difficult for people to become active.

*"This immersion in the community is ongoing and cannot be conditional. Our engagement with elected members, local groups and people will not stop. We are not just liaising. Ahead of our summer provision we really listened, empathised and planned to deliver based on what the community said. Our actions matched our intent and promises, and this is where our credibility lies. We are not delivering just anything, we are delivering agreed bespoke activities. This summer programme was our first stage and we need to tread carefully and follow the process patiently. Connectivity is the key to the success. Without connectivity a programme like this will fail"* – Community Team Summer Programme Full Report.

The Community Team's approach was purposefully serendipitous, allowing things to develop over time and organically. During the summer delivery in some parks using the sport vans, Kashmir Gardens in particular, local people found out about the sessions via a community WhatsApp group. The Community Team know how important it is to engage with key community champions (who can inspire and encourage others) and being able to spread the word informally in this way shows the power of the community in bringing people together, sharing ideas, and local insight. Creating connections with local community leaders enables the Community Team to reach out to a much wider audience and therefore help support more people in new and different ways. Local groups and communities are empowered to influence change and to play the key role in developing a physical activity offer that works for them.

## Recommendations

A key question posed for this evaluation was 'Is this way of working successful?' This doesn't mean reverting to numbers and metrics but having an agreed way to assess the difference made by SCT which remains outcome driven. Our study suggests that SCT has diverted resource into a different way of working purposefully designed to support communities. Without this focus, resource would otherwise have gone into well-meaning programmes, which lacked the ability to generate genuine community engagement.

SCT has played a role in bringing community groups and representatives to the table and letting them have a say on delivery and future direction. It is important that equal partnerships are generated from this, therefore we would recommend incorporating an informal and appropriate process of feedback and reflection with local organisations to ensure that they feel listened to and valued in the co-creation process.

Finding the right balance within delivery is a constant challenge: commercial income vs charitable work (to ensuring financial sustainability), offering healthy catering vs meeting demand / expectations. A quarter of SCT income reportedly comes from catering, so if SCT get the catering offer wrong (offering food that is good from a health perspective, but the demand isn't there) it would cause negative financial consequences. Whilst there is a desire to inspire people to make healthy choices and complement being active as part of a healthy lifestyle, this often is simply not a priority when working with communities within a challenging environmental context.

A major success factor of SCT is its people. Each case study highlights the role of staff and deliverers as a key component which makes the programme work (Safiya at RUY, Dawn Wood leading disability sport, Street Games deliverers and the summer programme team). SCT has an aim to '*Encourage our staff to have a favourable life and work balance through opportunity and investment*'. However, it is not clear how this works in practice? Is there more that needs to be done to support staff to achieve this? The highlighted success may be due to a limited number of people within SCT and its partner organisations, rather than the entire cohort of SCT staff working towards the same vision and applying the same principles. We recommend greater promotion of the successful mechanisms employed by the Community Team to increase awareness of their ways of thinking and how this is put into practice. SCT should aim for greater cohesion and connectivity around a core set of shared values, and a greater emphasis on shared learning and experiences to show how these can be achieved.

The Community Team themselves highlighted that there is still more work to be done on inclusion and diversity. The summer programme highlighted the challenge of providing religiously or culturally appropriate food, and a supplier of Halal food that would meet SCT standards was not identified, despite best efforts. There was visual and anecdotal evidence that the representativeness of imagery, marketing and promotion had improved, however SCT flagged that there remains more work to be done in this area. The introduction of a transgender policy and support of diverse groups is to be commended. Working with external experts such as the Activity Alliance could offer excellent advice and examples to support enhanced inclusive practice.