

Community Sports Networks

Implementation and
Investment Guidance

Get fit
Get healthy
Get active



Delivery System Rationale

The structures for administering and delivering sport are extremely complex. They have evolved, ad hoc, over a long period of time

Game Plan, December 2002

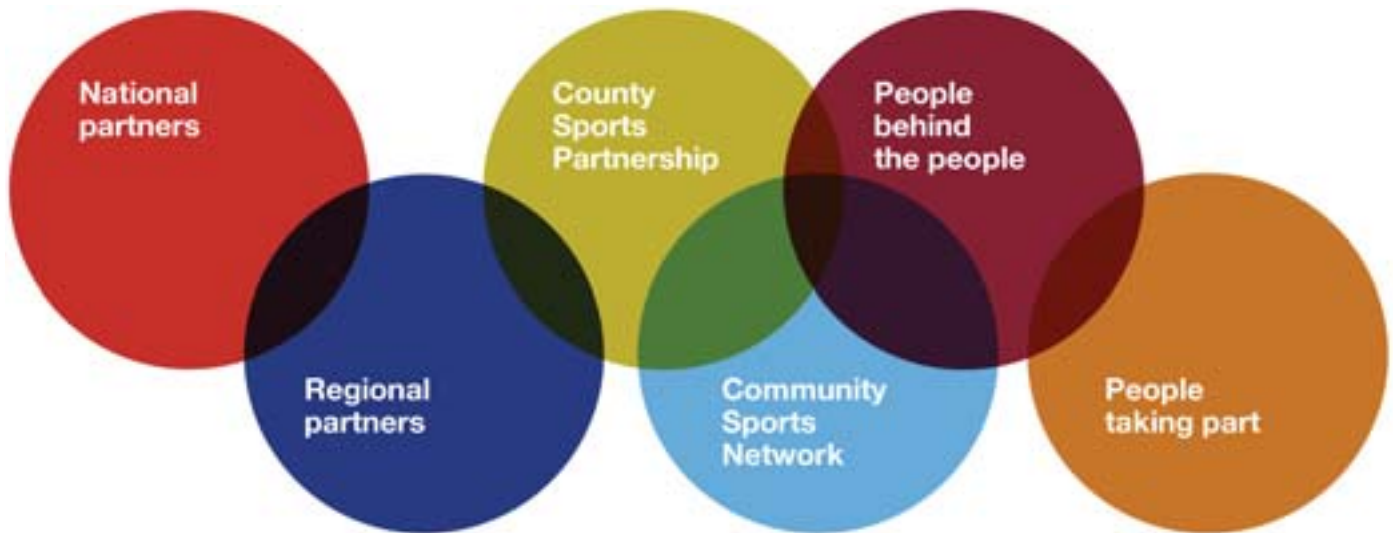
Government has set a national target to widen the base and increase numbers of people taking part in sport and active recreation in England by 1% annually. To achieve this, it will be necessary to work through a system for the delivery of sport and active recreation in England which is simple, systematic and joined up, overcoming the inefficiencies identified in both Game Plan and the Review of National Sport, Effort and Resources.

The National Framework for Sport identified that 'at a local level there was felt to be a need for all local authorities to 'take the lead', individually or in partnership with neighbouring authorities, for overseeing the strategic planning for structured sport, physical education, lifelong learning through sport, and informal recreation activities. This should incorporate all of the educational and early years, public sector, voluntary sector and commercial sector interests within their geographical boundaries and be linked to the wider 'shared priorities' for their communities'.

The Local Government White Paper: Strong and Prosperous Communities (October 2006) emphasizes a new approach to local partnerships, giving local authorities more opportunity to lead their area, work more effectively with other services and better meet the public's needs. There is a sharing focus on greater community engagement and involvement.

In order to maximise impact, efficiency and effectiveness, it is important that no one

The Delivery System for Sport



The Delivery System is in essence a delivery chain of cross sector organisations that will ensure:

- One strategy for sport
- An evidence based approach
- Robust performance management
- A bottom up, top down planning mechanism with investment targeted where it is needed most
- Resources that are placed where they can make the most effective and quickest difference to people taking part in sport and active recreation
- Joined up or integrated delivery.

Community Sports Networks

Community Sports Networks (CSNs) are an integral element of the Delivery System, however understanding of their role is limited. This guidance note will focus upon the composition, working practices and resourcing of the CSNs within the Delivery System. This document is targeted at key partners and stakeholders within the Delivery System itself, other communications tools are being developed for different audiences.





Community Sport Network outcomes

Whilst it is acknowledged that there should be flexibility in how CSNs develop, enabling them to be responsive to local need, it makes sense that each sign up to common outcomes, which enable the Delivery System to maximise its effectiveness, and CSN partners to achieve their priorities.

Core outcomes common to all CSNs

- Increase numbers of people taking part in sport and active recreation by 1% year on year
- Widen access to opportunities for sport and active recreation
- Bring together and align partners' existing priorities and targets within one joined up local action plan for and active recreation within the CSN area, based upon the needs of local communities and ensuring clarity in roles and responsibilities.

Whilst CSNs are likely to be focused on a local authority area (or potentially neighbourhoods within large cities), co-ordination and planning across local authority boundaries will be necessary to avoid duplication and to take advantage of creating economies of scale. Within the Delivery System, County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) are ideally placed to take on responsibility for this countywide perspective supporting the CSNs within their geographic area.

Where possible, building upon existing local networks, CSNs should:

- Be a group of local 'delivery agents' pulled from a range of relevant organisations and sectors
- Successfully coordinate opportunities for sport and active recreation in the local area by providing effective leadership
- Identify local needs, priorities and potential interventions, and develop a locally shared vision with buy in from key partners including the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), this may be the sport sub group of the LSP, to create economies of scale

- Coordinate the engagement and integration of sport in order to support the achievement of outcomes as part of Local Area Agreements (LAAs)
- Support the achievement of Performance Indicators (PIs) as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Process (CPA), where appropriate
- Secure resources from a broad range of partners to deliver the identified interventions and outcomes
- Support and assist in the creation and development of sporting pathways
- Focus upon building capacity to increase participation and widen opportunities
- Facilitate the provision of opportunities and the management of volunteers in sport
- Have formal links with the CSP core team to ensure an effective sub-regional Delivery System.

Community Sports Networks

Research has identified that local networks already exist at community level within some local authority areas. Where this is the case the priority is to link the existing network to the Delivery System, co-ordinated and supported by the CSP. Where this does not apply, Sport England officers will work with the CSP to encourage the development of CSNs by local delivery agents.

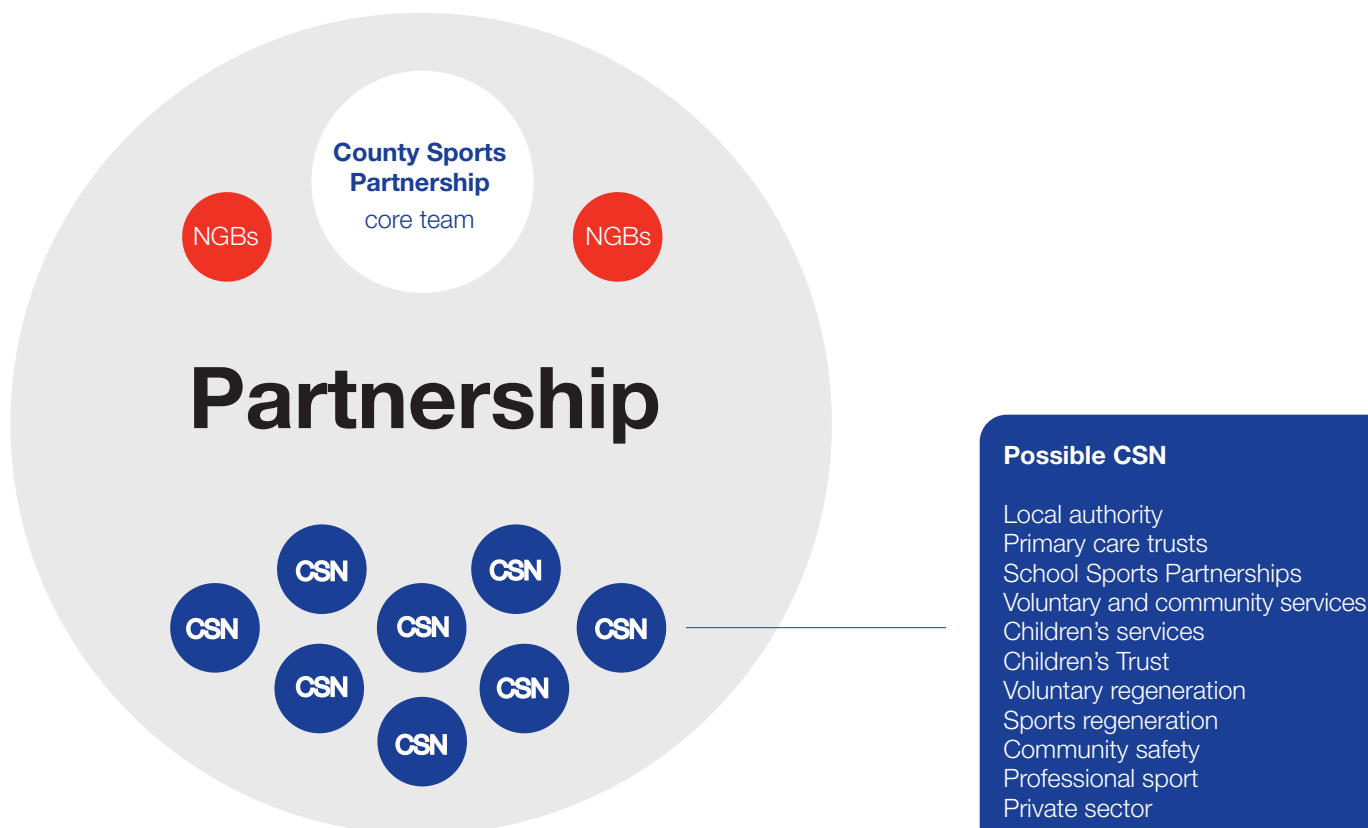
It is not necessary or indeed advisable to have a prescribed structure for a Community Sport Network. Its strength lies in its diversity and responsiveness to local issues. One of the CSN's greatest assets will be its ability to draw in the key players from the community to focus upon local needs and then to influence and shape interventions to ensure change occurs. The CSNs viewed by partners as having been developed by local partners to meet local needs will have more chance of sustainability than those being perceived as a Sport England initiative.

The key players will potentially include partners from across sport, health, all education and early years providers, community safety, regeneration and the local voluntary and community sector. A CSN might consist of between 10 and 20 such partners, might be called an alliance or a partnership, but all will have the same outcome of increasing numbers of people taking part in sport and active recreation.

It is unlikely that an existing local sports council will draw its membership from such a broad range of agencies. Where effective sports councils exist, a mechanism should be found to connect them to their emerging CSN.

CSN Composition

The diagram below gives an example of a CSN composition as a part of the sub regional partnership and its composition.



Key characteristics

By looking at the existing working structures a common range of key characteristics, roles and responsibilities can be identified that make the CSN model successful at recognising need and implementing change within the local environment. The checklist to the right should be used.

This checklist should be used to develop CSNs:

- **Ideally, but exclusively, covering the same geographic areas as local authorities.**
- **Comprise a representative group of key influencers from relevant local stakeholders – sporting or non-sporting, who have a shared interest in the outcomes of the CSN, and the use of sport to deliver broader social policy and community outcomes**
- **Ideally, membership should include representation from the CSP core team and school sport partnerships**
- **The local authority will ideally be involved from the outset, probably playing a lead role from a range of perspectives not just sports development and facility management**
- **Local stakeholders can be drawn from the public, private and voluntary sectors**
- **Linked, or working towards a link, with Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements**
- **Clear alignment and integration of the CSN within the sub-regional delivery system**
- **An agreed mandate to develop and lead the strategic vision and direction of formal and informal sport and active recreation locally, through an agreed action plan, which meets identified and proven local needs and priorities**
- **Demonstrate a commitment to effective partnership working.**

Action plan

A priority for the CSN upon establishment is the creation of an action plan identifying the priorities/shared actions of the various delivery agents.

There is not a prescribed template that should be adopted by all CSNs, but a range of sample action plans have been collated and can be downloaded from the Sport England web site:

www.sportengland.org

Measuring impact, efficiency and effectiveness

The key characteristics in the checklist provide comfort that the CSN is starting off on a strong footing, they are however only a proxy indicator of performance. A robust system should be put in place to measure the impact of the CSN. This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- Should the CSN be successful in securing funding for an intervention from Sport England, they will be required to sign up to key performance indicators, and measure the impact of that investment with the monitoring and evaluation toolkit. Please see Para 7 for further information
- Sport England's Active People Survey provides baseline data for the Delivery System. The adoption of the Active People Indicators by all members of the Delivery System in their data collection will allow comparisons to be made, and sport to demonstrate its value more robustly
- The CSN should be measuring its impact in achieving outcomes identified within its action plan that are likely to be linked to targets within Local Area Agreements, CPA etc
- Effective partnerships are essential if the Delivery System is to tackle complex issues that hinder participation and performance, maximise the benefit of available resources and concentrate on the achievement of performance outputs and outcomes. CSNs will be encouraged to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of partnerships. A range of evaluation tools for this have been developed.

CSNs are key components of a CSP. CSNs provide the critical link between the CSP and delivery at a local level. The relationship between the CSP and the CSN is vital to create a seamless, two-way flow of information and resources, and the achievement of mutually-agreed outcomes. The CSN and CSP will work together to interpret sub-regional, regional and national policy in the context of local needs and priorities, as well as ensuring the right information is in place relating to progress on key measures of performance.

The CSP core team can use its independence to play a key role in advising, co-ordinating and supporting a number of CSNs within the county to ensure that where necessary strategic decisions are made in conjunction with them. They will also have a key role in assisting CSNs to contribute to widening access and increasing numbers of people taking part in sport, and ensuring that they firmly meet the needs of the local community.

The CSP core team should play a major role in establishing the Delivery System within their sub-region in conjunction with the Sport England regional office.

County Sport Partnership Core Teams should:

- Support medium and long term planning through the production of sub-regional plans and priorities for action
- Interpret and shape national, regional and local policy to best fit future community need in partnership with their CSNs
- Provide a mechanism for information sharing, gathering, dissemination and innovation between and across CSNs, leading to more effective delivery at a local level
- Develop (in conjunction with their Sport England regional office) a process to support effective decision making and policy decisions for sport within their county
- Identify economies of scale and avoid duplication across boundaries
- Advocate robust performance measurement across the sub-regional Delivery System and the adoption of consistent indicators for sport.

Community Sport Network should:

- Feed action plans through their respective CSP to inform development of CSP sub-regional plans and priorities for action
- Work in partnership with other CSNs across the CSP area to share approaches and information
- Work with the CSP to interpret sub-regional and regional policy in the context of local needs and priorities
- Provide regular information about its work to the CSP, linking it to the CSP's performance management framework.

Resourcing the Delivery System

Given the range of agencies present within the Delivery System, funding will inevitably be drawn from both the public and private sector, ranging from mainstream budgets to intervention programme budgets.

Sport England is committed to investing through the Delivery System in the form of

ringfenced CSP core funding, and Sport England Community Investment Fund (CIF) funding. Given the pressure being exerted to invest on direct delivery, **Sport England will not be funding the CSN infrastructure**, but interventions identified within the CSN action plans that meet actions and outcomes identified within the National



Funding applications from Community Sports Networks

Policy context

The Sport England Main Board and the nine Regional Sports Boards across the country have made a commitment that CIF funding will be prioritised towards projects developed and delivered through the Delivery System for Sport. In reality, this translates primarily to supporting the implementation of plans driven by County Sports Partnerships, Community Sports Networks and their constituent organisations, focused on sport and active recreation interventions

This implementation guidance note reflects policy and procedures that are applied to any CIF application received by Sport England, but the characteristics and priority afforded to CSNs means that Sport England will be looking for a clear strategic fit with any proposals invited or received from them.

All applications to the CIF should ideally evidence support demonstrated by the CSP core team. A CSN action plan should ideally have endorsement from the relevant CSP in order for a CSN to begin making CIF applications, although it should be noted that a CSP does not have the power to veto any potential application for funding.

Community Sports Networks as eligible organisations

CSNs are in essence a way of working and as such are not intended to be constituted bodies. **It will therefore be necessary for one organisation to take overall responsibility for each funding application made to Sport England.** The lead applicant should be the member organisation from the CSN that is best placed to support and deliver the project post application. In all cases though, the application should come from a CSN that is demonstrating the key characteristics outlined on page six. Should a CSN choose to submit more than one CIF application, it is not necessary to have the same lead organisation for each bid.

Where a lead organisation is identified as being accountable for any CIF investment, the applicant organisation should be identified as the lead organisation, applying on behalf of a Community Sports Network. For example, Tendering District Council is the lead organisation in an application linked to Tendering Sports Network (the CSN). The applicant should be entered as **'Tendering District Council'** but the line **'applying on behalf of Tendering Sports Network'** should be used in all correspondence.

Eligible community sports network projects

Applications from CSNs must conform to the generic eligibility policies for the CIF.

However, specific policy guidance applies to CSNs because they comprise a number of different organisations all of which should have some input into the planning and delivery of the intervention.

- Any bid for funding of a project or activity from a CSN must be supported by a clear action plan (see example in Table 1 page 10)
- The application will have added strength if it has the support of the CSP
- The application should only be supported if it has been set out within the CSN's action plan. However, due consideration will be given to other projects to reflect innovation and unforeseen opportunities
- The table opposite shows an example of entries in a CSN action plan. It is important to note that the action plan does not represent a funding strategy but sets out the key priorities for delivery over a period of time. In this example, the objective to increase informal active recreation opportunities may result in a bid to Sport England but the second objective, to encourage the over-sixties to get more active, is unlikely to require CIF funding, but is still part of the overall CSN action plan.

Objectives	Action	Lead Responsibility	Resources	Timescales	How will success be measured?	CIF bid intended?
Increase informal active recreation – opportunities for adults	<p>Consultation has demonstrated demand for informal walking and cycling opportunities, particularly during evenings and weekends.</p> <p>Intention to identify and market safe, accessible routes in the area, identify volunteers to lead walking/cycling groups and then sustain participation with the formation of formal clubs/groups.</p>	Tendering Sports Development unit will lead and identify staff and individuals to run programmes. Leisure Trust will provide facilities at discounted rate in support of project.	£14,000 available from Community Safety £28,000 from Leisure Trust development budget. £10,000 confirmed from District Council, £20,000 confirmed Current shortfall of £20,000	<p>Funding available over 2 year period. Shortfall to be made up from funding bids.</p> <p>Intention to run programme with existing funds for 2 years – then aim for sustained levels of participation</p>	Numbers engaged, regular participants, increased numbers of volunteers assisting activities, sustained participation will be key indicators of success.	Yes, to request £20,000 shortfall.
Encourage greater physical activity for over 60s.	<p>Active People survey results indicate below average participation amongst over 60s in area.</p> <p>Needs analysis undertaken by PCT recommends delivery of tailored day sessions based on GP referral based at 3 sites in area. Programme will consist of active transport to facility, range of 1.5 hr wet and dry activity sessions, 1 hr education session and refreshments.</p>	Primary Care Trust will deliver tailored programmes through co-operation with GP surgeries (prescribing activity)	PCT has provided Health Improvement Officer time for development of proposals, all admin costs are catered for. Requires volunteer input to arrange sessions and some further funding to cover cost of facility fees, transport.	Programme in place by end August 2006. Review of actions in September 2007 and decision on ongoing success.	Number of GP surgeries registered with scheme, % of places available taken by GP referrals, regular users of service. Overall numbers engaged. Health improvement data.	No.

Table 1 – Example of a Community Sports Network Delivery Plan for illustrative purposes only, actual plans are likely to be more detailed

Sport England would expect to see the strategic need of any CSN application demonstrated through reference to local strategies. Applications will be received more favourably if there is a clear demonstration that the project will contribute towards the plans described in the relevant Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP) Community Plan and the outcomes established in the relevant Local Area Agreement (LAA) where they have been published.

There should be a clear link between the CSN, the LSP and the various strategies for culture, transport, urban renewal and so on. This will help the sport sector play its part in bringing to life the community development planned by these local partnerships.

Other relevant strategies should be considered in the assessment and development of the bid – the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate a wide strategic need for the project. It is not the responsibility of Sport England investment officers to search for and determine the strategic fit of a project – it must be evident and demonstrated within the application.

Funding applications from Community Sports Networks

Added value

Community Sports Networks are intended to bring together a range of partners to ensure that sports initiatives and projects operating in a local area are co-ordinated and that they draw on the individual strengths and priorities of member organisations.

The main reason for establishing Community Sports Networks is the desire for a coherent supply chain comprising organisations and partnerships that all add value to, rather than duplicate, existing provision for sport and active recreation. Any project or activity driven by CSNs must demonstrate this additional value. CSNs must not be considered as only another forum for the discussion and planning of existing local provision. They must **raise awareness of existing programmes and establish increased opportunities** for people to engage in sport and active recreation. It is important to communicate that CSNs are not a substitute for local authority responsibility for the delivery of leisure services and sports development.

Sport England officers are aware of local strategies and delivery plans which statutory organisations and other deliverers of sport and active recreation have developed. Each will have their own targets and priorities for development. The CSN has a key role in facilitating priority interventions that, without the bringing together of partners under the CSN umbrella, would not happen, or where a joint approach results in greater impact.

A key consideration in the development, targeting, and assessment of interventions from CSNs is the identification of local plans to ensure that anything put forward by the CSN **is in addition** to programmes, projects and activities that are already being delivered in a local area. An overview of the local strategic context and other relevant projects should therefore be included in the application.

Community Sports Network project types

Sport England will prioritise interventions that can demonstrate clear linkages with regional plans and priorities, offer clear sustainability and provide the best value for money in terms of outcomes. Applications that cannot demonstrate strategic need are likely to be unsuccessful.

Every intervention where funding is requested from CIF must present the following information:

- Evidence that the intervention being put forward for funding forms a central part of the CSN's overall action plan
- A breakdown of costs against the intervention and/or activity
- Identified accountability for the delivery of the intervention within the application by member organisations of the CSN
- Clear timescales for the delivery and duration of each intervention
- A reasonable level of partnership funding
- An approach that ensures **all** aspects of the application are deliverable within timescales agreed with Sport England as a condition of funding.

Capital projects

It is unlikely that a CSN itself will be able to apply directly for a project that involves capital development, as they are unlikely to possess security of tenure of any capital asset, or have a formalised constitution in place.

It is more likely that one of the member organisations of the CSN will have tenure over a property or land. They must, therefore act as the lead and accountable applicant for any CIF application. All other policies applied during the assessment of CSN applications shall remain valid.

Capital projects may still appear as integral parts of a CSN action plan, with the recognition that the overall accountability for the development will lie with one member organisation of the CSN.

Applications for capital projects from clubs or organisations outside of a CSN will still be considered as normal.

Revenue projects

It is expected that the majority of applications from CSNs will be for revenue interventions. There are a number of considerations that must be applied in the assessment of CSN applications of this nature.

- Any application should be focussed on the **delivery of services** to a particular group or groups – **not the planning for delivery**. Applications should clearly indicate the expected **measurable** impact on local participation in sport and active recreation
- Applications should meet the criteria laid down in the investment strategy of the Regional Sports Board in their region
- The role of the CSN is to plan and prepare for the interventions it wishes to see implemented so that funding can be channelled directly to the objectives and actions identified in the CSN action plan
- **The focus of any revenue project must be on the impact the investment and interventions will have on increasing opportunity for people taking part in sport and active recreation.** Through improving access to sport and active recreation, revenue investment must have a return that can be measured with use of one or more of Sport England's identified key performance indicators (KPIs). KPI targets for the return on any investment should be planned prior to an intervention commencing. Applicants will be required to fill in their KPIs at the first stage of the application process.

Project type	Why is it ineligible or low priority?
<p>Administration, set up/infrastructure costs, funding for consultation events, meetings, conferences, workshops, overall management of Community Sports Network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not directly contribute an increase in participation in sport and active recreation • Does not widen access to sport and active recreation • Impact on participation rates cannot be measured.
<p>Continuation of existing activities, programmes or projects run by any of the CSN member organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSN partners (particularly statutory bodies) will be encouraged by Sport England to perform this function as part of their overall contribution to the development of local sport • No additionality or long-term sustainability can be demonstrated by the applicant • CSNs are intended to increase, not sustain activities promoting sport and physical activity • CSN members (particularly statutory bodies) must be encouraged by Sport England to develop projects that have long term sustainability and are not reliant on grant aid.
<p>Extension of contract to existing co-ordination post.</p> <p>An example of this would be an application for continuation of a local authority development post or extension to the contract of an existing Sport Action Zone manager.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additionality or long term sustainability can be demonstrated by the applicant. • The intention of previously lottery-funded posts is that they would be made sustainable (without grant aid) in the long-term through longer-term planning in the initial phases of the post.
<p>Projects where input of a wide range of CSN member organisations is not demonstrated.</p> <p>The development of CSNs is intended to allow a greater degree of shared accountability and shared priorities, not to act as a vehicle for one organisation to promote their individual priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within the ethos of partnership working intended by the development of CSNs • Unlikely to command a wide range of partnership funders • Particularly when received from statutory bodies, Sport England will encourage 'mainstream' funding of activities.

Ineligible or low priority project types from Community Sports Networks

Any application supported and driven by a CSN is subject to the same overall eligibility criteria applied to all CIF applications. However, given the specific role of CSNs in the Delivery System, it is worth noting which parts of that role are not considered eligible for CIF funding.

Partnership funding for CSN projects

The greater the partnership funding contribution a CSN can make to a project and the greater the number of investors or partners, the better. Although it is not the most critical aspect of the assessment, it provides tangible evidence of the number of stakeholders in the project and it demonstrates their commitment to it. Considering the wide range of potential partners that will form a CSN, there should be considerable scope for a CSN to provide partnership funding at a reasonable level.

Sport England wish to see funding spread as widely as possible, so the more partnership funding CSNs can find, the more money Sport England will have available to contribute to other interventions.

Flexibility in the percentage funding levels that may be offered is at the sole discretion of Sport England. However, Sport England has a policy target of attracting £2 (not necessarily cash) for every £1 of Sport

England grant invested. This amounts to an average contribution of 35%. Individual grants can be much higher or much lower, although it is unlikely that a project will be supported with 100% funding.

Partnership funding can be made up of either cash or in-kind contributions. CSNs should refer to the guidance contained within the funding section of Sport England's website, and their respective Sport England regional investment strategy.

www.sportengland.org/funding



Monitoring and evaluation

Should a CSN be successful in securing funding for an intervention from CIF, then as part of the conditions of that award they will be required to sign up to Sport England's KPIs. The lead applicant representing the CSN, in conjunction with Sport England, will be required to select the indicators that are most appropriate to their project during stage one of the application process, develop a data collection process and measure the impact of their project against these indicators using the Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit.

Essentially, this process is exactly the same as for any other CIF funded project. The Monitoring and Evaluation toolkit is provided during the application process (available on the Sport England website: www.sportengland.org) with KPIs selected by the applicant at stage one and then agreed once an award has been successful.



This document can be provided in alternative languages, or alternative formats such as large print, Braille, tape and on disk upon request. Call the Sport England switchboard on 08458 508 508 for more details.

More information

To find out more about the Delivery System for Sport and to get the latest news and information about Sport England's various initiatives and programmes, please go to:

www.sportengland.org

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