

# **SPEAR**

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SPORT, PHYSICAL EDUCATION  
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**Youth Sport Trust**

**Lifetime Evaluation of the  
Change4Life Primary School  
Sports Club Programme**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**May 2015**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The Change4Life Primary School Sports Club programme is funded by the Department of Health and managed by the Youth Sport Trust. The clubs were introduced into primary schools in 2011/12 and aim to increase the physical activity, health and wellbeing of less active 7-9 year olds through the provision of fun multi-sport themes and healthy lifestyle activities. The success of the clubs has resulted in additional funding to expand the programme as a central part of a broader healthy lifestyle offer in schools. This is supported by the development of a hub of expertise focused in the areas of greatest health inequalities (priority areas) to support and share effective practice among schools and local authority Health and Wellbeing boards.

### ABOUT THE EVALUATION

SPEAR was commissioned from October 2013 to March 2015 to conduct a third, successive evaluation of the Change4Life Primary School Sports Club programme. SPEAR's current evaluation reflects both the changing context and priorities of the primary programme and, through a systematic, controlled experimental evaluation, provides the robust evidence base necessary to support the programme as it develops into the future. The 2015 Final Report presents a lifetime evaluation of the programme to date. Drawing together extant data from SPEAR's 2011/12 and 2012/13 evaluations with new data collated across 2013/14 and early 2014/15, this report focuses on the lifetime impact of the clubs in key areas, namely physical activity, health behaviours and wellbeing. The report shows how delivery has evolved to address programme aims, discusses challenges faced embedding clubs as a sustainable part of schools' healthy lifestyle offer and considers preliminary evidence of the impact of the new support framework in priority areas.

Data informing this report is drawn from the survey returns of over 7,500 children participating in more than 500 Change4Life School Sports Clubs and from just under 500 children in 15 control schools. Survey completions from over 2,000 club deliverers and SGOs, telephone interviews with 39 stakeholders and data from 20 site visits complements and triangulates the experimental data allowing the experiences and perspectives of a broad range of stakeholders to be presented.

### CHANGE4LIFE PRIMARY CLUB DELIVERY OUTCOMES ACROSS 2011-2015<sup>1</sup>

Number of...	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Change 2011/12 - 2014/15
Clubs established	4,074	4,012	5,910	7,211	+77%
Children participating	62,598	70,207	102,324	110,987	+77%
Young Leaders developed	4,136	6,025	10,715	15,794	+282%
Coaches trained	2,058	3,182	6,293	7,651	+272%

<sup>1</sup>Figures for 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 are drawn from full year monitoring data. Delivery outcomes for 2014/15 are projected from March 2015 monitoring data and the growth from interim to full year in previous years.

## WHO PARTICIPATED?

- Data from the controlled, experimental evaluation show that Change4Life Primary School Sports Clubs have a significant, positive impact on the activity levels, health behaviours and wellbeing of participating children.
- Around 270,000 children have participated in Change4Life Primary Clubs over the lifetime of the programme. Almost 222,000 (82%) were not achieving at least 60 active minutes every day on joining the clubs, including over 185,000 (69%) who were not achieving at least 30 active minutes every day, thus the clubs effectively reach the key target group of those children who are less active.
- Data from over 3,000 children demonstrate that the clubs are effective mechanisms for increasing physical activity levels among less active children regardless of the extent of their initial inactivity.
- The number of children achieving at least 60 active minutes every day by week 12 has increased by 69%, resulting in almost 33,000 additional children achieving at least 60 active minutes every day over the lifetime of the programme.
- Children's Survey data collated across 24 weeks show that children yet to achieve at least 60 active minutes every day can benefit from continued engagement in the clubs, however, children achieving at least 60 active minutes every day by week 12 are likely to regress unless they are transitioned into more challenging activity opportunities.
- The framework appears to be supporting schools in challenging areas to achieve the same positive outcomes as those that may face lesser challenges because there are no significant differences in the impact of the clubs between priority and other areas.

## WHAT WORKED?

- Insights from club leads suggest that the Change4Life Primary Clubs are seen as a 'safehouse' where children can play, and in the process, develop the creativity, aspirations, resilience, and empathy to engage in wider school life.
- Deliverer ratings for enhancing positive attitudes to being active and to sport, improving physical skills, increasing confidence and knowledge of healthy lifestyles and developing a sense of belonging remain very positive.
- The majority of SGOs and deliverers believe that Change4Life Primary Clubs have added value to schools healthy lifestyle offer, while over three-quarters think the clubs have added to school PE and sport provision.
- SGOs expressed concern around the depletion of equipment and resources in existing clubs. This may lead to a two-tier experience being delivered in which the experience of participants in existing clubs falls short of that delivered to participants in new clubs.
- The branded resources remain highly valued by schools in engaging stakeholders, retaining the ethos of the programme and providing targeted children with the Change4Life experience.
- The imperative of refreshing clubs and raising the profile of the programme was seen by SGOs as key to retaining the interest of schools and encouraging them to embed the programme as a sustainable and evidencable part of their healthy lifestyle offer.

## WHAT DID THE CLUBS LOOK LIKE?

- The average Change4Life Club runs for just over twelve weeks and takes place mostly at lunchtime or after school, in a designated space with fifteen members and two Young Leaders.
- In the average club, five members increase the number of days they achieve at least 60 active minutes, of whom two are newly achieving at least 60 active minutes every day.
- By the end of the 2014/15 academic year<sup>1</sup> it is estimated that over 7,200 Change4Life Primary Clubs will have delivered sessions to almost 111,000 participants and involved almost 15,800 Young Leaders and over 7,600 coaches.
- Almost half of schools ran their clubs beyond 12 weeks in 2013/14, and almost three-quarters aimed to do so in 2014/15.
- Since the programme began, the involvement of primary pupils in delivery has more than doubled, with almost a quarter of schools now providing opportunities for young people to help run the clubs.
- Preliminary data suggests that the support provided through the framework in priority areas is helping to reinvigorate clubs, foster links to the healthy schools agenda and encourage a sustainable model to be created in both new and existing clubs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Clearly articulate to schools how the Change4Life Primary Clubs support whole school agenda and Ofsted expectations because the broad scope of the programme is perceived as key to its appeal over other initiatives.*
2. *Focus efforts to sustain existing clubs on training and mentoring, and the replenishment of key branded resources because these are considered essential to preserving the ethos of the clubs and the Change4Life experience for children.*
3. *Promote the success of the programme in developing Young Leaders to encourage more schools to do so, in turn easing delivery resource tensions and providing valuable developmental opportunities for pupils across the school.*
4. *Encourage schools to transition children achieving 60 active minutes every day into more challenging activity opportunities to sustain their participation, and retain those yet to achieve 60 active minutes every day within the Change4Life Primary Clubs.*
5. *Advise schools to embed continuous monitoring into delivery of the Change4Life Primary Clubs to ensure appropriate turnover of club participants and maximise impact, and to evidence the value of their investment in the programme.*
6. *Recommendations for programme evaluation in 2015/16 are to: i) Establish the impact of the support framework; ii) Examine how effectively clubs are being sustained; iii) Assess programme alignment with public health priorities and; iv) Explore the possibility of attributing an economic value to the impact of the programme.*

<sup>1</sup> Delivery outcomes for 2014/15 projected from March 2015 monitoring data.