

# spear

centre for sport, physical education  
& activity research



## Round the World Challenge Final Report



February 2022

## About *spear*

The Centre for Sport, Physical Education & Activity Research (*spear*) is located within the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Social Sciences at Canterbury Christ Church University. *spear* undertakes a range of evidence-led analyses, from critical commentaries and reflections on current policy and practice, to commissioned research, evaluation and consultancy.

The Centre's research is funded by a range of national and international funders such as the International Olympic Committee, World Health Organisation, Terre des Hommes, Department of Health, Department for Education, Youth Sport Trust, Chance to Shine, Premiership Rugby, Sport Birmingham, parkrun UK and Sport England. Recent work has focused on sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing in schools and communities.

Research conducted by *spear* helps guide and inform public policy by contributing to the wider evidence base used by policy makers, providing a rationale for government and commercial investment, and steering programme improvements that enhance the experience of practitioners and participants.

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Round the World Challenge evaluation undertaken by *spear* and commissioned by Mencap. Final Report produced by *spear*.

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## Context

### About Round the World Challenge

Mencap's Round the World Challenge (RTWC) is a programme designed to support people with a learning disability to become more active. Participants turn hours of sport and activity into distance travelled around the world, with progress recorded in specially designed passports.



Following the pilot programme in 2014-2017, Sport England and Mencap invested in rolling RTWC out across England for a further three years (2019-2022) and introducing and resourcing the programme in Gravesham.

RTWC delivery is organised by Project Managers through regional Hubs. Delivery outputs and impacts are collated through the RTWC portal. The Hubs create a support network for individual, group and organisational providers: they provide a forum for sharing experience and expertise; support to access and use the RTWC portal, funding and resources; and guidance around provision of activity opportunities for people with a learning disability.

Covid-19 has affected the roll out and evaluation of RTWC and its development in Gravesham. It has also posed unprecedented challenges to people's daily lives. Rather than diminishing the value of the programme, the strengths of RTWC are exposed by the role it has played in helping people with a learning disability to manage these challenges.

### About *spear's* evaluation

*spear* was commissioned from June 2019 to February 2022 to conduct an independent evaluation of RTWC. The evaluation assesses the impacts of RTWC on stakeholders, and how these impacts have been achieved. It explores the challenges faced, showcases effective practice and provides key messages for enhancing provision.

The overarching evaluation comprises a rapid evidence review of activity interventions for people with a learning disability;<sup>1</sup> 10 multimedia case studies from site visits to RTWC locations; 110 interviews with RTWC providers; and secondary analysis of output and impact data from the RTWC portal.

This Final Report is divided into five substantive sections: Engagement, Delivery, Impact, Achievements, and Next Steps. Key Messages for *Creating positive experiences in active communities for people with a learning disability* are also provided. Five case studies are presented in appendix A and on the [spear website](#).

<sup>1</sup> [spear \(2021\) Rapid evidence review: Creating positive experiences in active communities.](#)

### RTWC outcomes

#### *...for participants*

1. Increased participation in sports or physical activity
2. Improved measures of health and wellbeing
3. Behaviour change and the formation of a sporting habit

#### *...for providers*

1. Improved social attitudes
2. Increased awareness of the role played in health promotion for people with learning disabilities
3. Increased opportunities for people with learning disabilities to participate in sport and physical activities

## Headline findings

Since 2019, RTWC has engaged almost 4,000 people with a learning disability in over 105,000 hours of sport and physical activity.



Participants joined RTWC to have fun, build confidence, become healthier, try new sports, learn new skills, make friends and feel more independent.



Providers engaged to expand or refresh their activity offer, enhance collaborative work and support participants' health, wellbeing, development and quality of life.



RTWC resources such as t-shirts, passports and postcards were highly effective in engaging and incentivising participation.



Over 200 providers participated in RTWC, delivering or facilitating over 41,000 activity sessions and training 361 participant volunteers.



RTWC appealed to providers because it was person-centred, simple in concept, structured, funded, and supported by Mencap and through the Hubs.




2014-2017 – RTWC pilot



2019-2022 – RTWC programme



“ Exercise is so important... to be offering throughout lockdown for people's physical health. But the thing we were most worried about was everyone's mental health. ”



Alison, Choice Support

“ We started designing a collaborative programme where we could use RTWC as a springboard for co-operative, 'leave-your-ego-at-the-door' work. RTWC provided a really nice opportunity where it was very person-centred, very simple in concept to do that. ”

Kris, Bristol Bears



RTWC aims to support

health

wellbeing

development



through appealing and accessible opportunities to be active.





## Engagement

*"We started designing a collaborative programme where we could use RTWC as a springboard for co-operative, 'leave-your-ego-at-the-door' work. RTWC provided a really nice opportunity where it was very person centred, very simple in concept to do that."*

Kris, Bristol Bears Community Foundation

RTWC was piloted between 2014-2017 and rolled out across England between 2019-2022. In late 2019, Covid-19 emerged. From the spring of 2020 onwards the pandemic and associated restrictions have affected almost all aspects of life, with the lives of people in vulnerable situations, including people with a learning disability, acutely affected.

RTWC aims to support the health, wellbeing and development of people with a learning disability through appealing and accessible opportunities to be active. Engagement in RTWC through the pandemic has been challenging. However, output figures for the programme and testimony from stakeholders attest to the appeal and value of RTWC.

Since 2019, RTWC has engaged almost 4,000 people with a learning disability in over 105,000 hours of sport and physical activity. The programme has engaged people from across the UK aged between 11 and 84. Around two-thirds of participants are male, a third female. A tenth of participants are from Black, Asian and Multiple Ethnic groups.

Participants say they joined RTWC to have fun, build confidence, become healthier, try new sports, learn new skills, make friends and feel more independent. The RTWC t-shirts, passports and postcards appealed to participants and were seen by providers as highly effective, external motivators for engagement.

RTWC attracted a broad range of service providers from across the learning disability and sport and leisure sectors. Over 200 providers engaged in the programme, delivering or facilitating over 41,000 activity sessions and training 361 participant volunteers. Providers engaged to expand or refresh their activity offer, enhance collaborative work and support participants' health, wellbeing, development and quality of life.

RTWC appealed to providers because it was person-centred, structured but simple in concept. Flexible funding and support from Mencap and the Hub network gave providers confidence they had the resource and scope to try new things and deliver RTWC in a way that best met participants' needs.

“

*It's definitely important to be active. If you wasn't active then you'd be stuck at home being bored all day not knowing what to do with yourself. It just helps you to keep fit.*

RTWC participant

“

*It's important to be healthy otherwise I'll get overweight and can pass away... It's good to be healthy and eating and drinking healthy stuff..*

RTWC participant

“

*It's good for your wellbeing and being stuck indoors is not very good.*

RTWC participant

“

*We decided for the staff, the people we support and their carers that exercise is so important for us to be offering throughout lockdown for people's physical health. But the thing we were most worried about was everyone's mental health.*

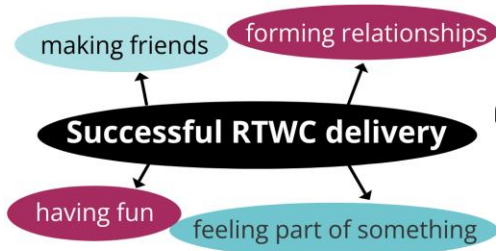
Alison, Choice Support

“

*This town is a real health deprivation hotspot. So we're giving people access to social, health and wellbeing activities which aren't available to them. The knock-on effects are that it may save us money and save the council money, benefiting the town on a larger scale.*

Andrew, Warrington Wolves

# Delivery



RTWC resources such as **t-shirts, passports and postcards** incentivise participation

“  
But it's more than that: if you put on a t-shirt, you're part of a team  
Zoe, Gravesham Phab Club



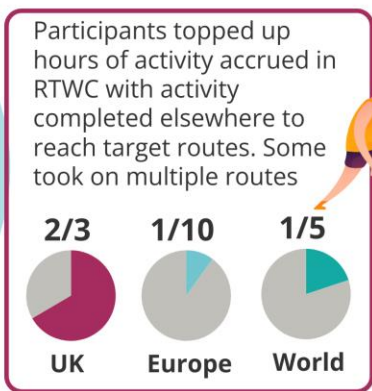
Participants' sense of belonging was enhanced through opportunities to **choose, plan and lead** activities

RTWC funding mainly spent on:

- specialised coaches
- facility hire
- travel
- equipment



Flexibility around funding helped providers **maximise opportunities** and **outcomes** for participants




**361** participants trained as volunteers


“  
We've got two hubs, one in the north of Bristol, one in the south, and each has a rotation of four different providers so it's a carousel for the service users. So participants get to trial and revisit everything.

Kris, Bristol Bears


## Headline findings


Covid-19 affected all aspects of RTWC including engagement, staffing, facilities, activities, delivery mechanism and programme focus. 

Throughout the pandemic, providers delivered or facilitated activities that support mental health and reduce loneliness and isolation. 

Activities were delivered online and face-to-face as appropriate, with many providers offering a dual service to cater for varying levels of participant vulnerability and readiness to re-engage. 

Several providers took advantage of Mencap's 'Let's Get Digital' programme to increase service users' accessibility to online provision and support. 

Activities delivered and participated in most often include walking, online activities, multisports, dance, gym, yoga, boccia and team sports. 

Providers have embraced RTWC's cross curricular application, celebrating countries reached en route by making flags, cooking national dishes and dressing up in traditional costume. 

## Delivery

*"It's been a bit like the hokey cokey. In 2020 we had to close the building and move our provision online. Then we were allowed to open and offered onsite but also online for people who didn't want to come in yet. We had to do a week on week off system so we could support people individually and collectively."*

Alison, Choice Support

RTWC delivery comprises physical activities delivered or facilitated by individual, group and organisational providers committed to supporting the health, wellbeing and development of people with a learning disability. Participants turn hours of sport and activity into distance travelled around the world, with progress recorded in RTWC passports and logged on the RTWC Portal.

Covid-19 affected all aspects of RTWC including engagement, staffing, facilities, activities, delivery mechanism and programme focus. Delivery was affected by building closures, staff furlough, 'stay at home' guidance and restrictions on social contact, particularly for vulnerable individuals.

Restrictions caused providers to cease, pause or adapt RTWC delivery. Several providers noted the pandemic forced them to rethink their provision, what they had to offer and what they wanted to achieve. They voiced concerns about the impact of the pandemic on service users' physical health, but main concerns centred around their mental health. As such, RTWC became a means for delivering or facilitating physical activities to support people's wellbeing and reduce loneliness and isolation.

Activities were delivered online and face-to-face as appropriate, with many providers offering a dual service to cater for varying levels of participant vulnerability and readiness to re-engage. Mencap partner providers took advantage of Mencap's 'Let's Get Digital' programme to increase service users' accessibility to online provision and support.

Participants were cautiously keen to engage with face-to-face activities once restrictions eased. Walking proved successful in encouraging re-engagement, providing much needed socialisation and support, a legitimate reason to get outside and a structure and focus for the day.

Further sports and activities were gradually reintroduced including multisports, dance, gym, yoga, boccia and team sports. Individual sport providers and local disability organisations tended to offer a small number of activities to a small participant cohort; larger or collaborative groups such as the Ignite Bristol Network used their connections, reach and resource to offer a carousel of activities to larger participant groups.

“

*My favourite activities are boccia, the walking football, being in the pool and curling.*

RTWC participant

“

*If I didn't come here then I'd probably be just stuck sitting at home watching TV so it gets me out the house.*

RTWC participant

“

*I love all of it, I love football, the t-shirts and the social side.*

RTWC participant

“

*So we're all apart at the moment but there are still things we can do. We may all be separate, but we're all still trying to work towards the same kind of goal.*

Dan, Gravesend Community Service

“

*The premise is to create a safe, secure space for our participants but give them as much variety as possible because it's a network group and we signpost to each other and into the wider community. It's like a tasting menu where you get to see what it's like and then be given information about where it happens at other times and places.*

Kris, Bristol Bears Community Foundation



Regardless of size or reach, the success of RTWC delivery is seen to hinge on the relationships built and the chance for participants to have a say, have fun with friends and feel part of something. RTWC resources such as t-shirts, passports and postcards have been highly effective in incentivising participation, but as one provider noted:

*“When they see the RTWC resources, their eyes light up. But it’s more than that: if you put on a t-shirt, you’re part of a team. They felt a sense of belonging and connection to something.”*

Zoe, Gravesham Phab Club

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Participants’ sense of belonging was enhanced by opportunities to choose, plan and lead activities and 361 participants trained as volunteers. Several providers purposefully encouraged staff, parents and carers to volunteer or take part in activities. While some preferred to sit and watch, those that actively engaged helped encourage participation and the extra helping hands were welcomed by providers and coaches delivering to large groups.

The challenge of balancing delivery and supporting participants, particularly those with profound or complex disabilities, was recognised by providers. Many reported spending their RTWC funding on specialised coaches so they had capacity to fully support engagement. Funding was also spent on facility hire, travel and equipment. Providers appreciated the flexibility afforded by Mencap as to how funding was spent, noting this helped them maximise activity opportunities and outcomes for participants.

Participants topped up hours of activity accrued in RTWC sessions with activity completed elsewhere to reach their target routes. Around two-thirds of participants embarked on the UK route (20hrs), a tenth Europe (40hrs) and a fifth the World (100hrs). Some participants took on multiple routes.

Hours of activity were recorded on the RTWC Portal. Some participants logged their own activity, but most activity was logged by providers. While RTWC administration was seen as time consuming, the custom built Portal specifically designed for accessibility was generally regarded as intuitive, user-friendly and fit for purpose.

Providers have embraced RTWC’s cross-curricular application, celebrating countries reached en-route by making flags, cooking national dishes and dressing up in traditional costumes. Several providers ran RTWC alongside other Mencap initiatives such as ‘Healthy Me’, taking inspiration and ideas from across programmes to enhance the breadth and choice of activity, wellbeing and development opportunities for service users.

The *Impact* of RTWC and *Next Steps* for providers are detailed on pages 8 to 10 and 12 respectively. However, the positive impact of RTWC is reflected in the commitment expressed by providers to embed physical activity as an integral, sustainable part of their offer.

“

*I love multi-sports, cricket, football and tag rugby, love doing it with friends.*

RTWC participant

“

*I like coming here because it gets me out and I get to see people.*

RTWC participant

“

*I love the social side, keeping fit and showing people what I can do.*

RTWC participant

“

*The staff support us by getting us out and seeing if we want to do these sorts of sessions each week. Seeing if we want to change anything about the sessions or improve them to make them more fun.*

RTWC participant

“

*It’s important the walking group is young person led. They’ve actually set up a RTWC WhatsApp group so they can talk to each other about the walks, where they’re going and what they’ve been doing.*

Nicola, Umbrella

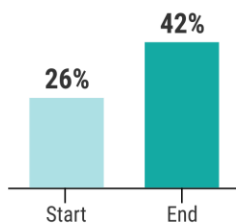
“

*We’ve got two hubs, one in the north of Bristol, one in the south, and each has a rotation of four different providers so it’s a carousel for the service users. So participants get to trial and revisit everything.*

Kris, Bristol Bears Community Foundation

## Participants

Significant increase in number of participants who are 'Active'



“using physical activity to make them more active, but also as an opportunity to improve their wellbeing and understanding of how to look after themselves.”

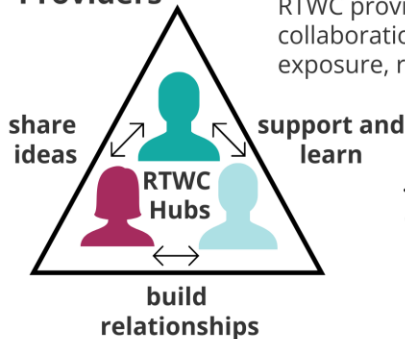
Tom, Inclusive Sport

Providers observed increases in:

- confidence
- aspirations
- social skills
- independence
- willingness to try new things
- sense of belonging



## Providers



RTWC provided a tangible opportunity for collaboration that increased organisational exposure, reach, remit and sustainability.

Providers able to find out what activities were available for service users

Leisure providers able to find groups who could benefit from their services

During the pandemic, RTWC was a means of keeping contact with service users and for some providers, was the **only programme** they were able to deliver.



## Headline findings

RTWC is reported by participants, providers and carers to have been a lifeline during Covid-19, giving them motivation, structure and purpose.



Providers believe RTWC helped offset the impacts of lockdown restrictions on participants' physical and mental health and wellbeing.



Participants' activity levels increased significantly, with the percentage reporting to be 'Active' (150+ mins p/wk), rising from 26% to 42% (↑62%) between the start and end of programme engagement.



Significant increases are evident in participants' happiness and confidence playing sports and being active with others, their enjoyment of new activities and understanding of how to live a healthy life.



RTWC also impacted wider wellbeing outcomes, with the percentage of participants feeling happy, accepted, valued and respected rising significantly across the programme.



Providers say engagement in RTWC strengthened networks, resulting in meaningful collaboration, better provision, increased reach and more appealing, diverse and sustainable activity opportunities.



## Impact

*“If I had a pound for every time one of the support workers said ‘they’ve never been able to do that before’, or ‘never tried that before’. Because it shows how little provision there is. Rather than concentrating on what people can’t do, we concentrate on what people can do.”*

Tom, Inclusive Sport

## Participants

RTWC is reported by stakeholders to have been a lifeline during Covid-19, giving participants motivation, structure and purpose. Lack of stimulus and social connection during the pandemic was seen to impact physical, mental, social and emotional health with providers noting reduced fitness levels, confidence and communication among service users.

Feedback from carers suggest RTWC was *“the only bit of normality”* (Julie, Choice Support) for some participants and that anticipation of sessions was *“the first time for ages they’ve showed some excitement”* (parent).

Whether taking part online or meeting to walk and talk, participants felt *“connected and part of a team”* (Sue, Folkestone & Hythe Mencap).

Beyond the pandemic, providers observed positive impacts on participants’ engagement in and enjoyment of physical activity. They also reported increases in participants’ confidence, social skills, independence and aspirations; in their willingness to try new things; in their sense of identity and belonging; and in their community engagement and trust.

Providers’ perceptions of impact are reflected in participants’ responses to the RTWC survey.<sup>2</sup> Participants’ activity levels increased significantly, with the percentage reporting to be ‘Active’ (150+ mins p/wk), rising from 26% to 42% across the programme. Significant improvements are also evident in perceptions of activity, wellbeing and development (figure 1).

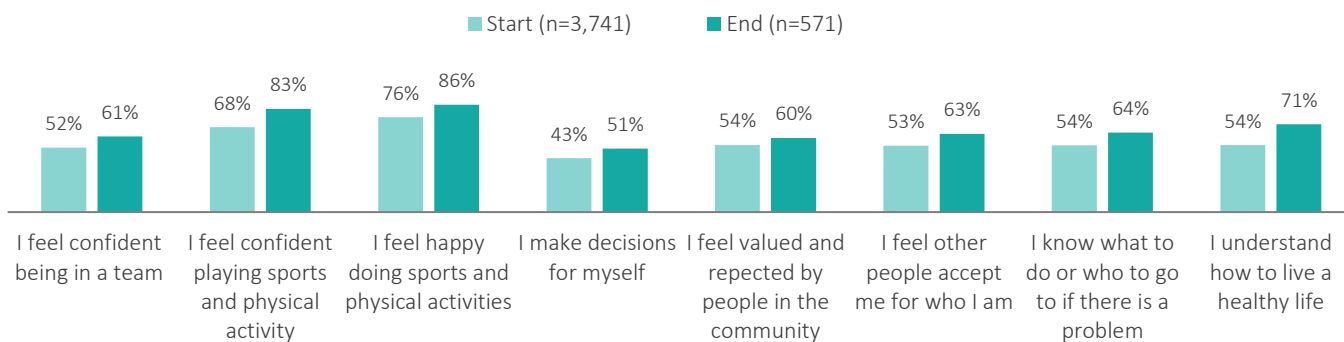


Figure 1. Participant perceptions of RTWC impact on activity engagement, wellbeing and development.

<sup>2</sup> Details of the RTWC Survey and analyses undertaken are provided in the Methodological Note on page 14.

“  
I’m happy meeting other people.  
RTWC participant

“  
I feel very hot, happy and tired after football.  
RTWC participant

“  
I lost weight doing RTWC, I don’t want to have diabetes.  
RTWC participant

“  
I got over some of my fears such as the climbing wall. I tried new things and made new friends.  
RTWC participant

“  
It’s good for meeting different people and getting exercise...we’re going out and doing all different things.  
RTWC participant

---

## Providers

Providers say engagement in RTWC strengthened networks, resulting in meaningful collaboration, better provision, increased reach and more appealing, diverse and sustainable activity opportunities. The chance to build relationships with other organisations they could support, learn from and share ideas with underpinned almost all reported impacts, and this chance was provided through the RTWC Hubs.

Hubs were seen to provide time and space for providers to get to know one another, talk about their grant application, their plans for RTWC and their challenges and achievements. Learning disability providers were able to find out what activities were available for their service users, while sport and leisure providers were able to find groups that could benefit from their services. Not all providers felt they needed Hub meetings, particularly those with a clear vision about what they wanted to do. Nonetheless, they valued the chance to support less confident providers.

In Gravesham, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) were looking to promote their open court strategy and KASBAH and Pathways were interested in tennis. With RTWC funding, connection through the Hub resulted in tennis sessions for service users and plans for sustained provision including training staff to run sessions. For Clare at Pathways, the benefits of connecting with Rob from the LTA was that Rob was an experienced, inclusive coach. Clare noted leisure centres do not always understand people with a learning disability whereas Rob understands and meets their needs, resulting in appealing and appropriate provision.

Leadership from RTWC regional managers was seen to promote an open development process, encouraging providers to “bring a little bit of extra capacity, drive and expertise to the table” (Kris, Bristol Bears Community Foundation). Flexible funding and feeling ‘trusted’ by Mencap around spending and delivery decisions gave providers confidence to innovate in provision. Not all innovations were successful, but some, for example collaborative, online or novel activities, surprised providers by their appeal.

The person-centred, interactive nature of RTWC impacted positively on participants: it also provided a boost to providers. During the pandemic, RTWC was seen as a means of keeping contact with service users and for some providers, was the only programme they were able to deliver. RTWC offered a chance to interact with like-minded, inclusive individuals and a tangible opportunity for collaboration that increased organisational exposure, reach, remit and sustainability. Hence engagement with Mencap and RTWC was believed to provide both social and financial value.

Providers were also cognisant of impacts on their communities. Several were situated in areas of health deprivation, deprivation keenly experienced and impactful on their service users. RTWC was seen to provide access to health and wellbeing activities which wouldn’t otherwise be available, and social opportunities to people at risk of social exclusion. Improving opportunities and outcomes for people with a learning disability was recognised for its potential to reduce financial and social burden, benefiting communities on a wider scale.

“

*The staff who had to plan RTWC are much more organised. Because of the terrible year we’ve had this has been a boost and given staff motivation and a purpose. It came at a great time.*

Joby, Vivo Care Choices

“

*If we go to the leisure centres they often don’t have understanding of learning disabilities and autism. It’s like they expect members to come in and use those facilities, but not understanding that they have other needs we need to meet.*

Clare, Pathways, Choice Support, Peppercorns

“

*It’s provided a really tangible opportunity to put our money where our mouth is instead of people just saying ‘Yeah, I want to work collaboratively’. The positivity of giving everyone a chance to work meaningfully together and taking the financial pressure off has been really nice.*

Kris, Bristol Bears Community Foundation

“

*Parents and carers said RTWC was a lifeline. Just going out and walking and talking was the only bit of normality a lot of our individuals had.*

Julie, Choice Support



## Achievements

*“It’s all about advocating, influencing and pulling partners together to work together to share best practice. It’s been a bit different over the last years but there’s still been fantastic stuff happening.”*

Gemma, Active South

Data presented in *Impact* on pages 8 to 10 show RTWC gave providers a tangible means of supporting service users when lockdown restrictions precluded standard provision. The structured simplicity of the programme, delivery and spending flexibility and support provided through Mencap and the Hubs were seen to motivate, equip and empower providers to deliver RTWC and in doing so, continue to support their service users. This was reported as a ‘lifeline’ by providers, parents, carers and participants.

The importance of building positive, empathetic relationships with service users and their support network featured strongly in interviews with providers. Good relationships were seen as pivotal to successful participation and overcoming logistical, psychological and social barriers to engagement. RTWC provided time and space for providers, service users and supporters to get to know one another better. This helped providers identify and respond to need, increasing participation and outcomes.

Providers recognise creating sustained change in activity behaviours and attitudes requires more than delivery of activity: it requires creation of environments and experiences that foster participant investment and growth. Participants welcomed the chance to choose, plan, support and lead activities. Giving participants ownership of RTWC helped create the sense of autonomy and belonging key to sustaining activity engagement in and beyond the programme.

Mencap support and RTWC funding and resources were valued highly by providers and seen as pivotal to delivery, engagement and outcomes. Challenges typically experienced by sport organisations included reaching and engaging people with a learning disability, while learning disability organisations reported difficulties accessing and affording specialist coaches, facilities and travel. Mencap support, funding and resources were seen to mitigate many of these challenges, providing “a boost to get things going”, “time to make provision sustainable” and “a chance to create long-term change” (Andrew, Warrington Wolves).

Hub meetings were praised for bringing people together in a supportive and safe space to share ideas, seek guidance and empower them to offer activities and delivery methods they may not otherwise have tried. Key to achieving the impacts described on pages 8 to 10 and the sustained change on page 12 is the collaborations initiated or strengthened through engagement with Mencap, with the Hubs and with RTWC.

“

*RTWC has helped me to be more aware and to become a whole better person. RTWC has inspired me.*

RTWC participant

“

*From doing cycling with RTWC I have bought myself a bike and go for bike rides a lot and also lots of walks. I have become fitter and healthier.*

RTWC participant

“

*Knowing, understanding and engaging support workers is absolutely critical. The last thing in the world they may want to do is be stood in the middle of the park in the tipping down rain, but they’ve got to do their job, but man their job’s rubbish that day. So if you don’t pay homage to that in any way, shape, or form, you’re failing.*

Kris, Bristol Bears  
Community Foundation

“

*Being able to promote RTWC from a well-established charity, Mencap, helps with credibility all the time. It’s also allowed me to reach Mencap communities I may have not done before.*

Tom, Inclusive Sport

## Next Steps

*“RTWC sustainability was about developing people to manage the programme in a different way, so we could learn collectively, not just how to deliver to and look after service users, but how to run a successful community programme. We now have tangible projects coming off the back of RTWC where we're using residual funding to develop offshoots. And some of the guys from the RTWC family have been brave enough to go out and have a go themselves, to fly the nest a little bit.”*

Kris, Bristol Bears Community Foundation

Survey responses from participants post-engagement suggest sustained, positive impacts on perceptions of activity, wellbeing and quality of life.<sup>3</sup> Only half of the 154 participants completing follow-up surveys said they planned to continue doing sport and activities, but over 90% said they felt happy doing sports and activities and almost two-thirds felt their physical health had improved. Around half of respondents said they had made friends through RTWC and now spend time with their new friends outside of RTWC.

The importance of sustaining and progressing activity opportunities for participants featured strongly in interviews with providers. Some providers built sustainability into delivery, utilising networks developed through RTWC to signpost participants to additional activity opportunities. Others focused on staff and volunteer development to ensure continued provision of high quality activity opportunities.

Challenges to delivering and sustaining activity opportunities have been experienced and are reported by providers. These centre around ongoing Covid-19 concerns, funding uncertainty, and facility access and affordability. Beyond the pandemic, each barrier or enabler reported by providers was perceived to be underpinned by perceptions of the social and financial value of activity provision for people with a learning disability among policy makers, investors and providers in the public health, sport and leisure sectors.

Providers call for targeted campaigns from key sport and disability organisations and recognition of inclusive activity provision through a quality standard or Kitemark. Action is advocated to raise awareness of social and financial value, secure buy-in from the leisure sector, and increase provision of high quality, accessible and affordable activity opportunities for people with a learning disability.

*Key Messages for Creating positive experiences in active communities for people with a learning disability* are presented on page 13. These messages incorporate the four pillars of successful activity interventions derived from and presented in *spear's* rapid evidence review, alongside recommendations from providers delivering RTWC.

<sup>3</sup> Details of the RTWC Survey and analyses undertaken are provided in the Methodological Note on page 14.

“

*It was amazing! I want to continue to do it to keep fit and healthy and spend time to meet friends.*

RTWC participant

“

*I think people's exercise regimes are going to carry on because that's what they're hinging their normality on. If everything's taken away again, we've gone through that scenario, I think people will think, oh, now I need to keep doing my walking.*

Julie, Choice Support

“

*A big part of volunteering is CPD so we can provide people with the right skills and ensure the sessions are at a high level when we leave. And as much as RTWC is great, we can't just go do it and then leave, the provision has to be sustainable.*

Georgie, Sale Sharks

“

*It's sharpened us up in terms of activity with a purpose and pulling it all together. I'm not sure we'll do RTWC again but we'll certainly utilise the links we've made and any equipment purchased will last until its wheels fall off.*

Tom, Spectrum Northants

## *Creating positive experiences in active communities for people with a learning disability*



### Get to know people



Research and practice show understanding the Whole Person is key to successful activity interventions. Providers highlight the uniqueness of people with a learning disability and embrace the diversity in their desires, aspirations and expectations. However, they also recognise this diversity poses challenges, and that these challenges can only be overcome by getting to know and understand the whole person.

*“Assume you know nothing, build a relationship, and the rest of it will come”*

Kris, Bristol Bears

### Support the supporters



Providers say caregivers are critical to creating positive activity experiences for people with a learning disability, but few strategically plan how to engage them. Those that do focus on two aspects: Education and Support. Providers successfully engaging caregivers spend time building relationships, communicating the value of activity and making engagement as appealing and accessible as possible.

*“Overtime support workers will see it's worthwhile, it's relaxed and it's fun and they can't help but get involved”*

Tom, Inclusive Sport

### Trust in partnerships



A Whole Systems Approach involves building a supportive infrastructure around the individual. The more levels of the infrastructure orientated to be supportive, and the more they work together, the better the chance of success. RTWC demonstrates how effective partnership work is, but it is the trust between partners that is seen as pivotal to the programme's reach and impact.

*“If we come together under one banner, if we trust one another, we can achieve so much more”*

Lizzie, Access Sport

### Campaign, incentivise and reward



Support across the health, sport and leisure sectors is key to achieving a Whole Systems Approach to increasing activity opportunities for people with a learning disability. Providers call for targeted campaigns from key sport and disability organisations and recognition of inclusive activity provision through a quality standard or Kitemark. Action is advocated to raise awareness of social and financial value, secure buy-in, and increase provision of high quality, accessible and affordable activity opportunities.

*“It's not saying do everything for free, help these people out; it's saying here's the value, the value to being more aware, more accessible and more inclusive”*

Kris, Bristol Bears

# Methodological Note

## RTWC Surveys

The RTWC Participant Surveys were developed by Mencap and completed on the RTWC Portal. The surveys were designed to assess key outcome indicators for participants, including physical, mental, social and emotional health; individual development; quality of life; and community connectedness and trust. Surveys were completed at the start and end of programme engagement, with a follow-up survey completed 4-8 weeks later.

The RTWC Participant Surveys were amended in 2020 to reduce completion burden. No questions were changed, but some were removed. These changes did not affect the analyses or validity or reliability of results beyond their impact on survey sample size, particularly for end of programme and follow-up survey completion.

## RTWC Survey Samples and MME

At the time of reporting (February 2022) RTWC Surveys had been completed by 3,741 participants at the start of programme engagement, 571 participants at the end of programme engagement, and 154 participants at follow-up. Reduced sample sizes for end of programme and follow-up returns reflect the removal of some questions in 2020, expected attrition in survey completion over multiple timepoints, and the impact of the pandemic on programme delivery and engagement.

The sample of survey returns at the start and end of programme engagement have a MME of 0.1% and 3.8% respectively. The sample of survey returns at follow-up have a MME of 7.7% and should be viewed with caution.

## Data Analyses

Throughout this report, data presented from the RTWC Surveys represent the responses of all participants. Descriptive and inferential tests have been conducted to generate frequencies and explore statistical differences, and where identified, these differences are presented in this report. All analyses were conducted in SPSS v26.

### Maximum Margin of Error (MME)

The MME shows the level of accuracy the participant sample has; the smaller the MME, the greater the accuracy. It is calculated at the standard 95% confidence level so we can be 95% confident that the sample results reflect the population results to within the MME. For example, if the survey sample has a MME of +/-5% and 50% of participants say they 'enjoy being active', if the survey were conducted 100 times, the percentage who state they 'enjoy being active' would range between 45% and 55% most (95%) of the time.

### Statistical significance

Throughout this report, where changes in participants' responses are reported, they are statistically significant at  $p < .05$ . This means there is a less than a 5% chance that changes reported are not real changes that might be expected in the wider population beyond the sample.