

Working in Partnership to transform the sports workforce across Cumbria – The Sports Workforce Education Programme (SWEP)

1. Background

Over a number of years, Active Cumbria has created a strong and innovative working relationship with commercial partner New Balance Athletics Shoes Ltd.

Through this partnership, Active Cumbria have been able to proactively increase the amount of investment coming into Cumbria to develop the sports workforce to help drive up the quality and quantity of those working in sport across Cumbria.

Over the three years of the programme, the New Balance Charitable Foundation for International Giving, based in Boston, USA, is providing £60,000 cash funding to the programme being delivered by Active Cumbria, and a further £21,000 worth of sports clothing.

'We are delighted to be working with Active Cumbria, the work they do will ensure that this funding will go as far as possible to addressing skills gaps.' – Liam Burns, Europe, Asia & Middle East Business Manager, New Balance

By working in collaboration with the New Balance Charitable Foundation, Active Cumbria has agreed mutual aims and objectives ensuring that over 1000 learning outcomes will be delivered across the three years of the programme, resulting in increased participation levels in sport and physical activity, whilst also increasing the brand awareness of New Balance in Cumbria, through this high quality initiative.



2. The Challenge

For a number of years, many national governing bodies of sport had highlighted skills gaps across the county in various coaching and volunteering roles. The previous Active Cumbria coach education bursary scheme was not fully meeting the needs of national governing bodies of sport and delivery organisations, and did not link explicitly with national governing body of sport priorities.

The lack of a suitably experienced and qualified workforce was having a detrimental impact on many national governing body's ability to successfully deliver their whole sport plan outcomes across the county.

Many national governing bodies did not have a joined up workforce plan for Cumbria that covered all aspects of workforce requirements, and which had SMART targets attributed to it.

3. The Solution

The Sports Workforce Education Programme has been designed to provide focussed support to national governing bodies of sport to enable them to have the best chance of delivering their whole sport plans in Cumbria. This is a three year programme, supporting an increased number of needs led learning outcomes each year, with a three year target of delivering 1000 learning outcomes.

The programme provides a menu of educational courses covering coaching, volunteering, club development, development of officials as well as offering bespoke training courses to support the development of a vibrant network of community sports clubs and delivery mechanisms across Cumbria, it is completely needs led and informed by insight from each respective national governing body of sport or delivery agency.

The programme consists of three distinct elements, these being the Bursary Element, the Essentials Element, and the Coaching+ Element.

a. **The Bursary Element**

Through the provision of £50,000 funding from New Balance, Active Cumbria has redeveloped its bursary scheme to encompass the whole sports workforce, with the clear outcome of providing a suitably trained workforce to allow national governing bodies of sport to land their products to ultimately achieve their whole sport plans locally. This funding has levered in a similar amount of matched funding from the national governing body or local delivery agency to maximise the impact and ensure that best value is achieved.

b. **The Essentials Element**

Consists of two main areas that are essential to active delivery and a vibrant sporting infrastructure: -

- The provision of a county wide programme of essential minimum standard education covering courses such as safeguarding and protecting children, working with disabled performers, and first-aid.
- The provision of a bespoke service for delivery agencies where group delivery of courses can be facilitated.

c. **The Coaching+ Element**

Consists of two main areas to support the whole participant pathway, again developing and supporting the sports workforce to create a stronger and more vibrant delivery network: -

- The creation of a Cumbria Talent Coaches group, where national governing bodies of sport have nominated a number of their high level or aspiring coaches, who are working within that sports talent pathway. A series of networking events, workshops, and facilitated sessions have been delivered to support the needs of this group of coaches, both in terms of developing their own coaching careers and skill sets, which in turn provide better support to our talented athletes within the county. To date support has been provided to 6 NGB's, 14 coaches and 8 coach developers.
- The provision of the annual Cumbria Coaching Conference provides the opportunity for coaches working across the talent pathway in Cumbria to meet and learn from each other and to engage with highly respected coaches and sports scientists.

4. Impact to date

Through this programme Active Cumbria has supported 21 national governing bodies of sport to establish workforce development plans, which have been created following a rigorous audit process to identify gaps. Cumbria can now boast workforce development plans in the following sports, which prior to this programme did not exist: -

Athletics, Badminton, Bowls, Canoeing, Cricket, Football, Golf, Gymnastics, Hockey, Netball, Rowing, Rugby League, Rugby Union, Sailing, Snow sports, Swimming, Taekwondo, Tennis, Triathlon and Wheelchair Basketball.

By the end of Year 2 (31 March 2016) the programme can boast the following impressive impacts: -

- 411 individuals have gained new skills
- 860 Learning outcomes / qualifications
- 4,512 new sports participants
- £31,933 funding from New Balance
- £21,000 in kind New Balance clothing
- £37,197 partnership funding
- **£90,130 total investment in workforce development**

Through the additional sports clothing provided by New Balance, participants who are part of the Talent Coaches Group all receive branded New Balance clothing and training shoes, which has raised the profile of the group, which has been promoted across communication channels and in the local media to create brand awareness for New Balance. Other participants, including attendees at the annual coaching conference also receive New Balance branded clothing, which helps to create a sense of belonging and buy in for the programme.

Moving forward, the programme will continue with a focused approach to underrepresented groups, concentrating on increasing and developing the number of female and disabled coaches working across the county.

