

Key findings from the second year of the Active Women evaluation

The Active Women programme and evaluation

In January 2011 20 applicants were awarded £7.5m of revenue funding for projects targeting women in disadvantaged communities and women caring for children. IFF Research is evaluating the programme. The second interim report covers the period to June 2013. A third and final evaluation report will be published in summer 2014. For more information visit:

<http://www.sportengland.org/research/encouraging-take-up/key-influences/sport-and-women/>.

More than 90,000 women have taken part so far

Participants: The 20 projects have reported a total of 93,855 participants to date (100% of target).

Women from deprived areas: The 18 projects that have provided figures for this measure reported 16,582 participants from deprived areas (45% of target).

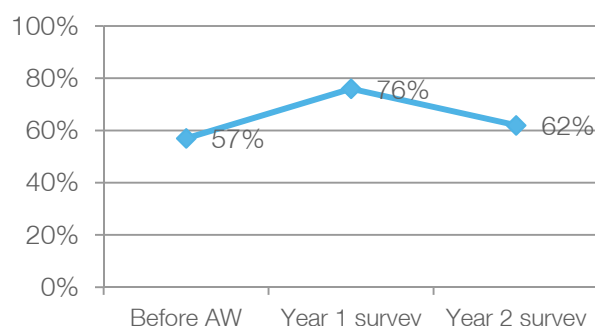
Women caring for children: The 14 projects that have provided figures for this measure reported 18,536 participants with child caring responsibilities (46% of target).

Throughput: The 12 projects that have provided figures for this measure reported 160,981 attendances (51% of target).

Impact

- Just under half (46%) of the women that joined in summer 2011 and responded to a survey in summer 2012 said were doing more sport than they had been doing before their involvement with the AW project (compared with 20% doing the same and 33% doing less).
- Nearly one in three (28%) women felt they would not have done any sport without the AW project and a further half (49%) say they would have done less sport.
- Participants were very positive about the softer impacts of their sessions: nearly all (97%) had fun, while 80% felt fitter and 82% felt better about themselves.

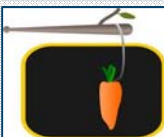
Proportion of women that joined the AW project in summer 2011 taking part in sport at least once per week



Learning



Recruitment and Marketing: Effective techniques have included face to face recruitment, personal contact from coaches, encouraging women to 'bring a friend', promotion in non-sporting locations, linking with partners, providing easy to access and practical information about sessions



Barriers and Motivations: Motivations included the social and laid back nature of sessions, sessions catering for all abilities and fitness levels, women-only and low cost. Barriers included nerves about attending alone, concerns about weight, fitness level and not being sporty.



Variety: Each project takes place in a specific local context with different types of women so no one activity works well across the board, although projects did report particular success with badminton, running and swimming. Partnerships facilitated the range of activities on offer.

Learning

Partnerships: Partnerships, mostly with public and third sector organisations, have been used to help with promotion and recruitment (getting to women the project wouldn't otherwise reach), and provide funding/staff/equipment/facilities to enable more and different activities to take place.



Retention: Projects have boosted retention by reviewing the timing of sessions, keeping classes low cost, increasing comms from project staff, providing 'soft skills' training for coaches, improving staff-to-participant ratios, offering incentives, variety and the opportunity to progress.



Keeping activities going and women involved: Projects have taken steps to ensure sustainability by training participants to lead activities, involving participants in decision making, working with community partners, securing alternative funding, introducing charges, and providing exit routes.

