

The development of **physical activity and wellbeing** courses in Oxfordshire, using the combination of **exercise and mental health education** to improve health and wellbeing.

Courses were **developed** and **adapted** over a long period of time and evolved to meet the **needs of the community** and creating a bespoke course to tackle the growing prevalence of **mental health problems in young people**.



COMMUNITY NEED

67,600

There are 67,600 patients with Depression registered with GP's in Oxfordshire.

7.7 million

Half of adults aged 55 and over have experienced mental health problems.

30%

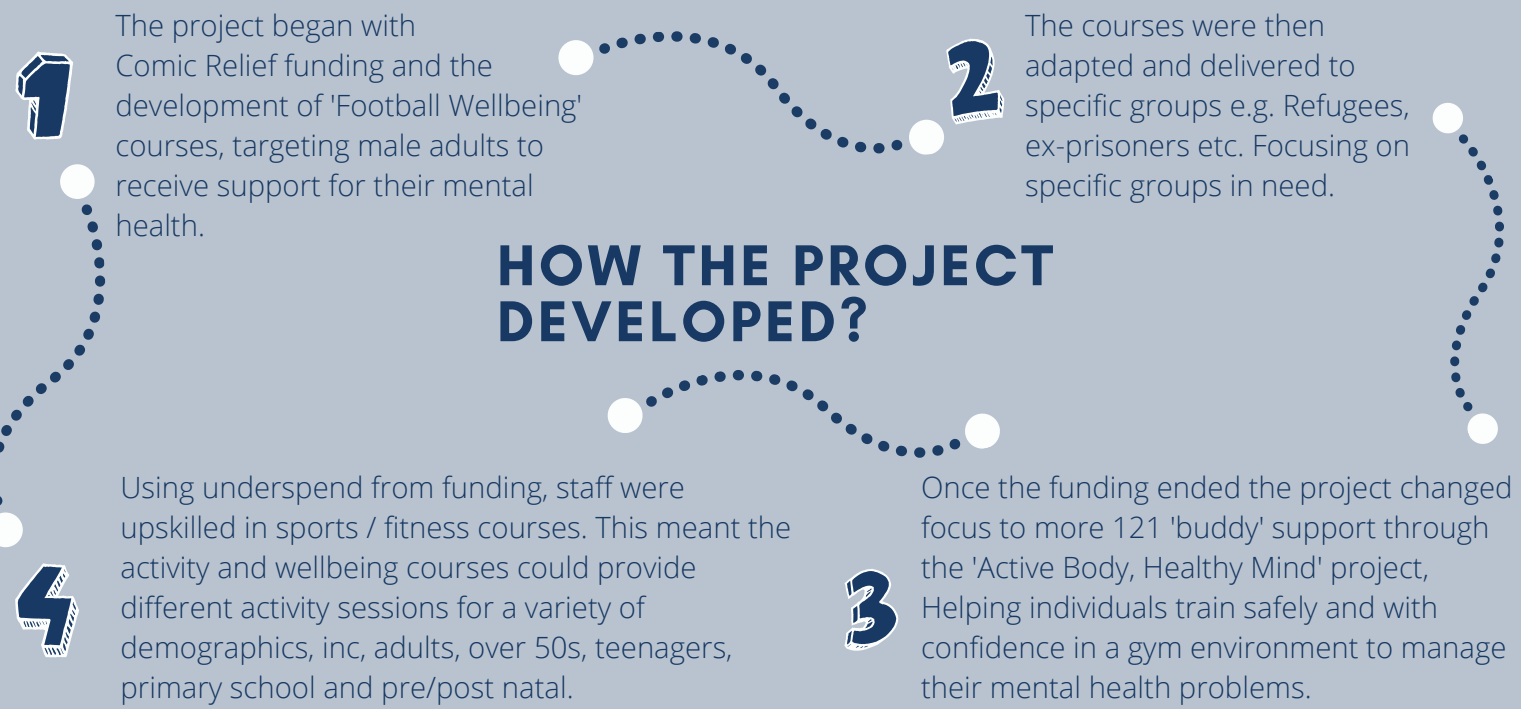
30% of the UK population live with one or more long-term conditions, and more than 4 million of these people will have a mental health problem.

“Oxfordshire has an increasing and above-average percentage of children with social, emotional and mental health problems.”

“The number of mental health referrals for young people has increased significantly over the past 5 years.”

“Self-harm admissions are increasing in young people (aged 10-24 years) in Oxfordshire and are above the national average.”

“Mental health and wellbeing accounted for 20% of interventions by School Health Nurses and 14% of interventions by the College Nurse Service in Oxfordshire.”



THE PROJECT

The **'Activity & Wellbeing'** courses provide a combination of physical activity and mental health support/education.

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After being inspired by their experience of **boxing**, staff at Oxfordshire Mind developed a **successful four-week pilot course** for adults, blending a mental health workshop with boxing skills.

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Oxfordshire Mind used Sport England's 'Sportivate' funding to adapt the course for **young people**, creating the **'Boxing for Wellbeing'** course, focusing on 7 schools with the highest rate of self-harm.

BOXING FOR WELLBEING

The activity element of the course focused on learning Boxing skills using pad work, progressing to learn new skills each week.

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Each session involved students working on coping strategies and skills to improve wellbeing. Topics included stress, anxiety, social media and intro to wellbeing.

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Training courses in mental health awareness for sport and physical activity, 2-day mental health first aid and 1-day Level 1 boxing qualification were provided for PE staff and the senior leadership team.

Co-facilitation played an important role when working with schools. Delivering the course with a member of the school staff gave the young people a trusted contact they can share their feelings with if they wish.

Combining physical activity and mental health during the same session changed the dynamic and helped break down barriers. The group activity element also helped with engagement from participants.

An important part of achieving success was ensuring the participants received long-term benefit and were provided with the skills, education and resource to continue receiving the impact of the course for better physical and mental wellbeing.

The partnerships utilised for the project were invaluable, including building relationships with schools and working in collaboration with Active Oxfordshire to receive support with the development of the project and access to funding.

WHAT WAS KEY TO MAKING IT A SUCCESS?

HOW WAS LIVED EXPERIENCE INVOLVED?



Feedback from school peer mentors and pupils helped understand their needs and the topics they wanted to learn during the workshops. Regular communication throughout the courses meant the delivery could be adaptable to the needs of the pupils and provided their input on the workshop content to ensure it is relevant for the group.



The co-delivery of the 'Activity and Wellbeing' courses utilised the involvement of an Oxfordshire Mind staff member with lived experience of mental health problems. Beginning as a service user during the 'Active Body, Healthy Mind' project, he then progressed to working as a volunteer and finally to full-time work, providing valuable experience and insight for the 'Boxing for Wellbeing' courses in schools.

OUTCOMES



The course has been delivered in 17 schools across Oxfordshire, working with over 200 pupils.



Participants gained the skills and confidence to continue boxing independently after the course at a gym or boxing club.



Training courses delivered to school staff were a success with 87% attendance and 93% rating the course as good or amazing.

87%

of the participants want to do another course in the future.

97%

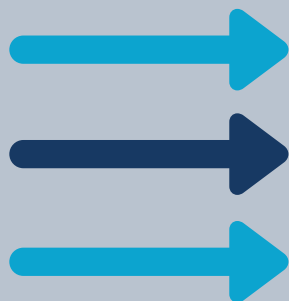
Stated their wellbeing had maintained or improved.

67%

Improved WEMWBS Score.

Before the course

Interested
Exhausted
Sad
Anxious
Unhappy
Bored
Tired
Happy
Confused
Annoyed
Worried
Angry
Excited

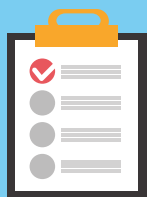


After the course

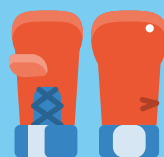
Inspired
Excited
Cheerful
Relaxed
Brave
Suprised
Tired
Happy
Confident
Energised
Amazing
Strong
Interested

"The course helped us to learn coping strategies, boost our confidence and give us healthy ways to relieve stress. This has had a significant impact on our everyday lives. The course also encouraged us to share our problems knowing it was in a secure environment."

"Overall, we found the course beneficial as we now have different ways to cope with day to day struggles that used to seem unmanageable. We now have a more positive mindset and things don't seem so bad."

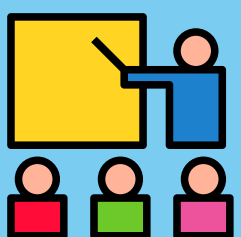


Planning - To ensure sustainability and consistency in the quality of course delivery, a protocol document was created. This provided all the details for delivering the course so it could be shared in the team.



Equipment - Satellite Club funding helped us consider sustainability methods for the project. On top of training for school staff, each school was provided with their own boxing equipment up to the worth of £200 to continue delivering the sessions.

SUSTAINABILITY



Training - The upskilling of staff built the foundation to begin delivering the Activity & wellbeing courses' and was vital for sustainability. We provided sports and exercise courses to support delivery across different demographics, as well as providing mental health awareness for sport and physical activity training for PE staff and 2-day mental health first aid training for senior leadership teams.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE



It is important that you have staff with good **knowledge** and **experience** of mental health involved in the planning and delivery of the project. This will help to ensure **appropriate support** is available during the sessions and that the participants needs and potential barriers are taking into account.



Create **positive cross-sector partnerships** for the project, making sure the objective and needs of the target group are the most important thing...**don't care who gets the credit!**



Have a **funding plan** in place for sustainability and the **long-term development** of your intervention. Utilise learning from your pilot projects to make improvements and expand your project to support more people.



Work with **like minded** organisations that you **trust to deliver** and **share your objectives**. Don't leave the project with one person, **share the learning and workload** to ensure it can be sustained and delivered by the whole team.

CONTACT INFO

Lucy Tappin - Active Communities Manager, Active Oxfordshire
lucytappin@activeoxfordshire.org

Annie Silence - Physical Activity and Wellbeing Coordinator
annie.sillence@oxfordshiremind.org.uk