

Evaluation of the MAPAG Holiday Activities Summer 2017

MAPAG facilitated three holiday activities during the summer of 2017: funding children to participate in Camp Activ8 at the Leisure Centre, funding Innov8 Sport CIC to deliver the Stay Fit for the Summer programme for young people, and a day-trip to Bournemouth. The funding of children to participate in Camp Activ8 was piloted last year, the other two activities were pilots this year. The main aim of all three activities was to offer positive leisure activities in the summer for children, young people and families from lower socio-economic backgrounds in the Marlborough Area.

The feedback we received was positive for all three activities, as is detailed below. Due to the short time we had to advertise the Stay Fit sessions, the numbers for this activity were low, and we were not able to target specifically the young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. We are considering a different model for these activities next year. For the other two activities, our aim was achieved, and we plan to continue to offer these opportunities next summer.

Stay Fit for Summer Programme

Over the course of the summer holidays Innov8 Sportz CIC (referred to as Innov8 in the following) delivered the Stay Fit for Summer programme for the young people of Marlborough. The project was funded by MAPAG through the Marlborough Area Board.

Innov8 provided 6 sessions during the summer holidays at Elcot Lane football pitches in Marlborough. The sessions were charged at a voluntary contribution of £2 per session for young people, 13-19 years, who live within the Marlborough area. The project was successful for those who attended, as they got to try many new activities that they had not previously heard of. This allowed all participants to play on an even playing field in an environment where there is no fear of failure or ridicule. Unfortunately, a very short window for promotion of the event at the end of the school term led to a lower than anticipated attendance.

Session Attendance

The session attendance was low throughout the programme: 11 individuals participated (10 male 1 female). This was much lower than we would have expected for this pilot programme. This was due to many factors, including: it being a Pilot Programme, promotional issues due to late confirmation of funding, attendees being on holiday and potential session timings and day.

The decision was made to lower the number of coaches at the sessions after the third session to make the sessions more cost effective (reduced from £120 a session to £60 a Session), and allow them to continue for the full 6 weeks. Although session attendance was low, the sessions were engaging and fun for those who attended. This is shown by those people returning to future sessions and through feedback gained from those who participated.

Participant and parent feedback

Feedback from the participants and parents was positive and included some nice comments about the session:

- When asked what did you like best one child wrote: "I liked that we had the choice to play games that we like and lots of other different games" and another child wrote that "the coaches are really friendly and all of the sports are really fun"

- When asked did they make friends one child wrote: “I met people I didn’t know and asked my friends to come along too”
- When asked was there anything you tried for the first time: all participants replied “Yes – Gaga ball, ultimate frisbee, y-ball, tchoukball, cone-ball.”
- Parents feedback was unfortunately from just one parent whose comments included: “Good to get them out the house for 2 hours, enjoying playing sporting activities with friends and the nice lads” and “I feel it is really important for children to enjoy sports outside and play with other children”. The same parent commented that more advertising, for example through Facebook would have been helpful.

Future collaborations between MAPAG and Innov8 Sportz CIC

The best way forward for both parties would be for MAPAG to use their funding to pay directly for people from a lower socioeconomic background to attend sessions run by Innov8 or Wiltshire council, rather than funding Innov8 directly to deliver sessions. This would be more cost effective for MAPAG and help us use our money where it is needed most.

Bournemouth Day Trip

21 adults and 25 children + MAPAG volunteers joined the trip to Bournemouth on Thursday 27th July. Most people heard about the trip through the letter sent out by the school or through the Parent Support Advisor, Lisa Feeney. The trip included a visit to the Oceanarium, a Fish & Chips lunch, a free afternoon and transport from Marlborough to Bournemouth and back.

The aim of the trip was to give families the opportunity to do something together, which they may not have been able to afford themselves. The participants each contributed £5 to the day, which included lunch. The trip was evaluated through questionnaires, which were completed during the bus journey back. The following feedback was obtained through these questionnaires:

Participant feedback

Amongst the things that people enjoyed most was the playing on the beach, the following were mentioned: the socialising with other adults, playing on the beach, being treated, the Aquarium, and the going on the beach with ‘a lovely group of people’. When asking what could have been better, most of the people didn’t have any comments, although communication about lunch was mentioned a few times.

To see if we reached our target group, i.e., those people who would not have many other opportunities to go away during the summer holiday, we asked if the participants were going on any other trips or holidays this summer. About one third of the people answered that they were not going anywhere else, with a majority stating that this was for financial reasons. Others who had planned other trips, were mostly having their holiday within the South West.

Evaluation of the data

These comments show that for the majority of people we have achieved the aim of providing a positive activity for the families, and that we reached people of lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Looking towards the future, we intend to facilitate a similar trip, keeping in mind that there needs to be more clarity about the practical arrangements, such as lunch.

Camp Activ8 at the Leisure Centre

15 children attended 11 of whom are on benefits. This data shows that the majority of children we supported come from families that are on benefits, or have so-called 'pupil-premium' status, which means that we indeed have reached the children coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Participant feedback

The following is written by Morrison, who ran the Activate programme at the Marlborough Leisure Centre:

"Many of the children said that they made new friends - which is specifically good for their social interaction skills as we now primarily live in a technology-based society. The children had the opportunity to interact with children from different schools and from different age groups meaning that they could have potentially made some friends for when they change from primary to secondary school.

Others said that they were getting better at swimming, which obviously means that they were getting fitter and healthier from an hour in the pool every day. A couple of children said that at the beginning of the holidays they could barely swim a width and towards the end of the summer, they worked up to doing lengths. Of course, the extra activities in the hall would have contributed as they have access to a variety of different activities such as table tennis, football, dodgeball and indoor hockey.

Multiple children said that they feel more confident in themselves as well as talking and playing with others. We even had children helping out with our special needs children – making sure that they understood the tasks, ensuring that they had help where necessary, getting them involved with different games, etc.

Finally, children were able to practice arts & crafts and colouring that they might not get the time for outside of school hours and this is good for their imagination/creativity. They were given opportunities to learn about different things as well as try new activities, such as archery, that would normally cost a fortune so it also opens a few doors of possibility for them.

In addition, Amy Scott, Customer Services Manager at Marlborough Leisure Centre collected the following feedback from parents:

Feedback from parents: One Dad mentioned that the kids slept super well the night of being in Activate and they also really enjoyed the sporting activities; and a Mum said that her daughter's confidence grew massively after attending Camp Activ8, because she was getting to know more people and became a bit more outgoing."

Evaluation of the data

The scheme this year had a similar uptake and similar feedback to last year. We had hoped to have an increase in the number of participants, but partly due to Lisa Feeney's illness, we have not been able to establish these relationships.

We intend to run a similar scheme next year, trying to improve the diversity of people we reach, in particular reaching out into the villages in the Marlborough area.