



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

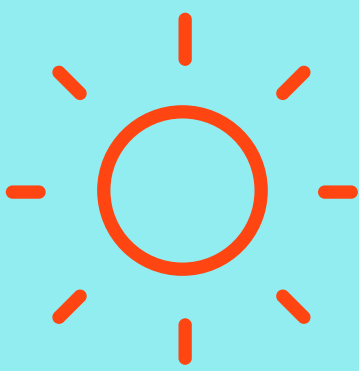


Sport and Physical Activity

Impact Report
March 2022

Contents

To read our impact report, click through using the arrows at the top right of each page. If you want to read a specific section, click on the title on the right to jump straight to it. You can come back to the Contents at any time by clicking the ‘Back to Contents’ button on the top left of each page.



- 03 About this impact report
- 04 Our journey
- 05 *Do What Moves You*
- 07 Caring for our community’s wellbeing
- 08 A changing culture and the way we work
- 09 Building skills through our expertise
- 10 Creating great spaces (and making them better)
- 11 Removing barriers to belonging
- 12 Making a positive impact on the wider Leeds community
- 13 Caring for our University of Leeds community –
An ongoing response to COVID-19
- 14 Spaces to improve
- 15 Thanks and next steps
- 16 Working with us and contact

About this impact report

In this report, we set out to fully assess the impact made through the implementation of *Do What Moves You*, which is the University of Leeds sport and physical activity strategy led by the Sport and Physical Activity service.



The events of the last couple of years have been challenging beyond anything I've experienced in my lifetime, and yet, they've also been a reminder to me of the important role Sport and Physical Activity can play in people's lives. The challenge has been significant – motivating and supporting people to be active against a backdrop of legally restricted movement, increased screen time and limited socialising. However, it is also those circumstances that have led to a broadening of the options for influence through increased digital competency in the wider UK population and a huge rise in awareness of the role physical activity has in our wellbeing and quality of life.

These changes have meant the work we undertook was very different than what we planned for in *Do What Moves You*. Despite this, the Sport and Physical Activity team focused on the core aim of supporting peoples wellbeing using whatever skills and resources were available and mitigating against the negative impact of the pandemic restrictions.

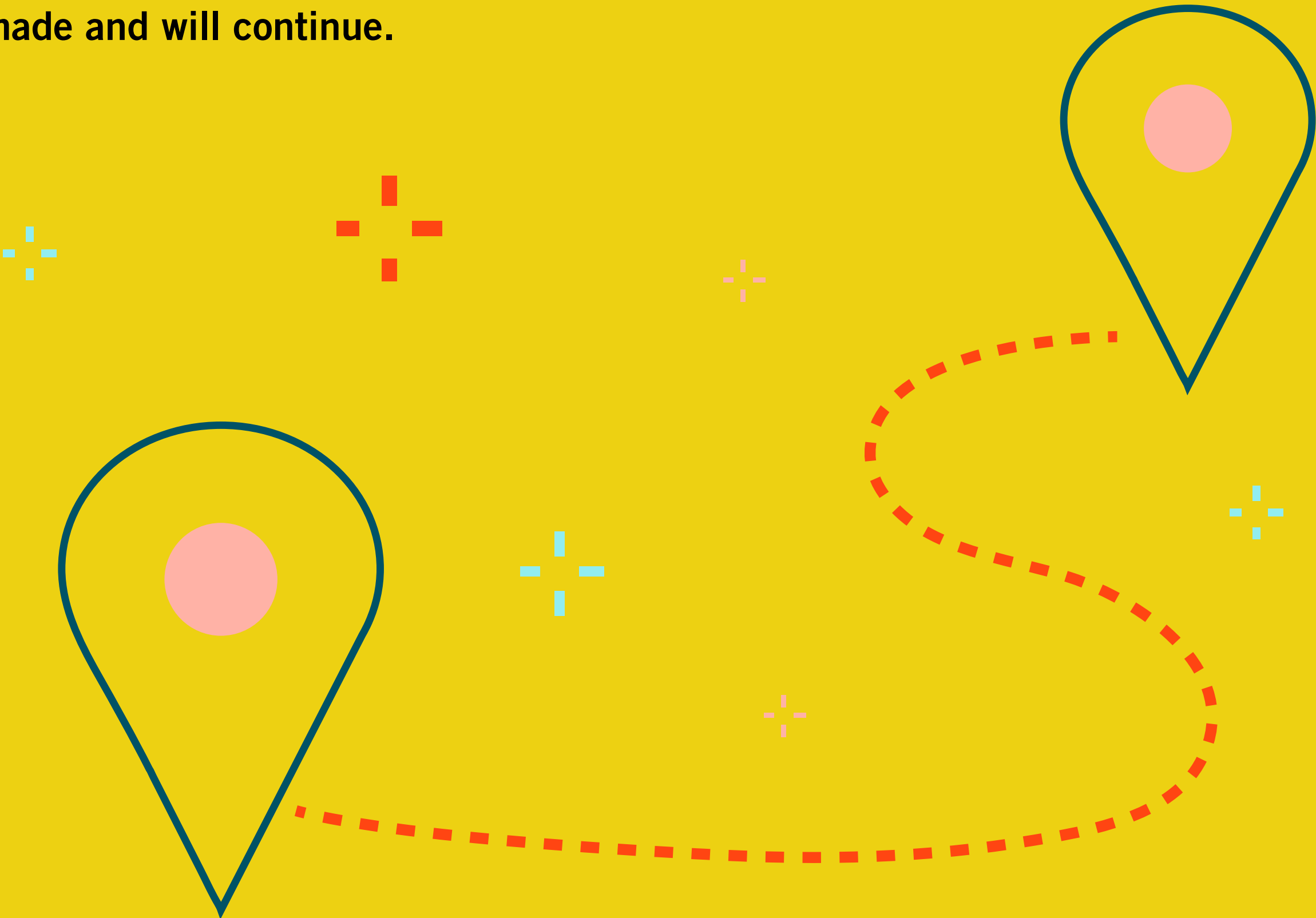
In the report we seek to do two things. First, we explore what has been achieved in relation to the current strategy *Do What Moves You* and second, we reflect on what has been achieved (and the challenges that remain) against the backdrop of both the pandemic, and the new University strategic landscape, including the new 10-year strategy, *Universal Values, Global Change*, refreshed values and a clear, recently released Enabling Strategy.

So join us as we look back, consider what progress has been made since 2019 and reflect on what that might mean for the future role of Sport and Physical Activity at the University of Leeds.

Suzanne Glavin
Head of Sport & Physical Activity
University of Leeds

Our journey

Over the last two strategic periods, since 2014, Sport and Physical Activity at the University of Leeds has been on a journey of change both in terms of the work that is undertaken and the way in which that work is executed. That journey is not complete but progress has been made and will continue.



Moving towards understanding and advocating for Sport and Physical Activity as a tool for development and wellbeing

There has been a deliberate shift away from solely focusing on sport for the purpose of competition towards a more holistic understanding of how physical activity and sport can be a means for individuals and groups in our community to thrive. Where high-level competitive sport is central to activity (and there are many successful programmes within the University), it is clear that the objective is to deliver the best environment possible and support students and staff, such that they have the tools, resources and space to fully achieve their own potential.

“ We all play a role. We work together with academic and sporting colleagues to find a way to support that student, that athlete, to give them the best chance of achieving their aims.”

Staff member SPA

(Re)Finding our place

In the last three years, much of the work of the Sport and Physical Activity team has been focused on responding to the challenges of the pandemic, or working to minimise the impact on services rather than focusing fully on the execution of *Do What Moves You*. Like many other teams spoken to during the consultation, little time has been available to use for exploring ideas, developing mutual understanding of goals and developing concepts into something more. The outcome has been that sometimes Sport and Physical Activity are not considered in

the early stages of development conversations for major University initiatives or in the more strategic development conversations. As we return to a more broad programme of work beyond COVID-19, there is an opportunity to rebuild connections, networks and deepen relationships across the University and the city and create space to advocate for Sport and Physical Activity as a vehicle for achieving many mutual outcomes, including increasing professional literacy, teamwork and empathy for individuals and, more broadly, aims such as improved community enrichment and contributing to the development of better global citizens.

Moving from responsive partnership towards developmental collaboration

Work continues to move partnership working beyond the transactional approach. Partner organisations offered clear commendations within various projects where they described the engagement as highly responsive.

“ Where we asked, and we needed support or assistance, they found a way to make it work”

Community partner

A new strategic environment in the University and broader opportunities requires a more collaborative and pro-active relationship-building style. Partnership working is strongest where it can continue between specific projects and where the team actively seeks out and proposes opportunities to support other departments and groups in achieving their own aims through Sport and Physical Activity. Whilst being responsive to needs is an excellent quality in partnership working, even more can be mutually gained when space and time is available to explore opportunities and ideas.

Do What Moves You

In 2019, we released *Do What Moves You*, which marked the clear next steps in advocating for Sport and Physical Activity as a means to support staff and student wellbeing, a tool to develop skills and achieve potential and to make a positive and sustainable impact on the local community.

Mission:

Through our facilities, services and partnerships we will create an inspiring environment where being active is easy, accessible, sustainable and rewarding for students, staff, alumni and local communities.

The events of 2020 created a backdrop of falling activity rates and a drop in people’s wellbeing as pandemic restrictions evolved and this meant people couldn’t access support in the same way. In the case of some goals, they were no longer always relevant. But like all our colleagues across the University, we persevered and have made up significant lost ground regarding activity levels and programmes since March 2020.

A summary of some of the headline achievements is presented in the following pages, with an indication of the respective benchmarks where they exist.

Aim/Theme	Direction of progress	Where we were — 2018	Where we are now
Aim: 75% of students and staff active.	↓	74% Active.	67% (up 10% from 2020 data during pandemic restrictions) The biggest shift is staff and students slipping from active to fairly active during the pandemic. In the wider population, the shift was more pronounced from fairly active to inactive.
Aim: 10% of students engaged in the academic, leadership and volunteering offer provided through the Sport & Physical Activity service.	↑		833 students engaged in 20/21 (3%)
Aim: 1 in 5 students join a Gryphon club.	→	6,972 sport club memberships.	One in five of our student population will choose to join a Gryphon sports club. 8,700 members in 72 ‘Gryphon’ clubs (10,171 members of 92 clubs that include various physical activity.
Sport and Physical Activity Levels.	↑	39% staff and students regularly taking part in exercise From Balancing Life Survey.	57% regularly doing physical exercise.
Wellbeing Scores (average SWEMWBS score) See Balancing Life Survey.	↓	22.1	21.31. up 1.33 from 2020 43% of people reported high levels of anxiety. Down 4% from last year.
Improved wellbeing for staff and students.	↓	120+ Students benefitting from Student Support Service Referral Scheme. Staff referral programme in place via Occupational Health (35 beneficiaries).	Referral programme continues to grow with 200+ referrals a year. Disability Services and Plus Programme- two new pathways established as part of the Lifestyle and Wellbeing Programme.

Aim/Theme	Direction of progress	Where we were — 2018	Where we are now
Students ready for their future	↑	300+ students developed as community sport volunteers 1,787 hours of volunteering through structured programmes (2017-18). Refreshed scholarship programme supporting 62 athletes across 21 sports.	465 Students engaged in the volunteer programme since 2019. Average of 2,748 hrs of volunteering over last 3 complete years. 18 live current volunteering programmes mobilising over 50,000 participations in 3 years. LEED Modules continue to see student growth and high feedback scores. 15 Modules 300 students. Overall module average score (4.6/5 – 2019).
Enriching the student experience	↑	‘Dual Career’ approach developed and formalised as part of a commitment to developing the person and the athlete.	TASS Dual-Career accreditation confirmed – July 2021.
Creating a positive impact on the city	→	Leeds Triathlon Centre has been developed, a partnership cementing the world class reputation for Triathlon in Leeds. Other formalised partnerships in hockey, cricket, rugby union, rowing.	Relationships with Leeds Boat Club and Triathlon Centre partnership continue to mature and maintain strength. Leeds reputation as a world class city for triathlon continues to develop through increased press coverage and our annual mass participation events such as Let’s Ride and Leeds 10k. Training Camp host for multiple professional teams including Rugby League World Cup.
Demonstrable commitment to sustainability	↑		1st Sustainability Architect in place within team. SPA blueprint plan agreed. Our newest facility project is all electric, designed with passivhaus principles and the Bio diversity project developed at the Bodington site aims to encourage people to be active through outdoors on field studies at home rather than overseas.

Aim/Theme	Direction of progress	Where we were — 2018	Where we are now
BUCS Position	↓	18th (17/18)	19th (Feb 22)
Customer satisfaction rating of service		79.6% (17/18)	Customer Service Excellent Accreditation Achieved. Comparative Numbers Not Yet Available. Club Member Satisfaction. 92% agree or strongly agree with the statement – My club provides good value for money. 96% agree or strongly agree with the statement – My club offers a friendly and enjoyable. 95% agree or strongly agree with the statement – My club is inclusive in its activities social scene.
Membership	↓	14,211 memberships (2018)	11,770
Total Income		£4.5m (16/17)	£3.0m (21/22)
Facilities			Work begins on Bodington development. First in a £40 million , 5 year masterplan of facility development and first all electric building contributing to net zero carbon target. 100% of club members surveyed, agreed or strongly agreed the facilities provided are high quality and fit for purpose.

Caring for our community’s physical and mental health

In the last three years, the pressures on people’s wellbeing have intensified more than ever. Working in partnership with colleagues, such as our friends in Counselling Services and Occupational Health, the physical activity and wellbeing team have developed and delivered programmes and activities that support staff and students to experience and improve their wellbeing. These range from the highly individualized Lifestyle and Wellbeing Referral Programme through to bitesize posture video classes and recordings which help to address the challenge of additional desk time many of us have faced since March 2020.



Key connections to University of Leeds strategy and values:

Community
Collaboration



Supporting staff and students on an individual basis to improve their wellbeing

This programme helps staff and students to review and adapt their lifestyle to enable better wellbeing, covering everything from diet and sleep to exercise, stress and lifestyle.

Over 450 students and staff have received individual support since 2019, helping them to identify specific action, tools and support to improve their wellbeing.

Two new referral pathways have been added with Disability Services and the Plus Programme to give more students a chance to access this holistic programme of support.

Helping fight the risks of an increasingly sedentary working life

A popular series of 15-minute postural sessions aiming to prevent and target pain or stiffness linked with a sedentary job/lifestyle.

Staff from throughout the University have benefitted from 73 bitesize sessions to date, with 2005 participations to date and 121 engaging in pilates in the first two months of 2022 alone.

Changes to lifestyles, working patterns and equipment were identified as additional challenges in 2020. Adapting sessions to bitesize and online enabled more staff to make manageable change for a positive impact.



Helping students love their time at Leeds by supporting them to get out into the local green spaces and meet other students has been one of my highlights.”

Staff member working with Get Out, Get Active

A changing culture and the way we work

The Sport and Physical Activity team are incredibly passionate about supporting others to achieve their goals. We work in two distinct ways but seek to improve how these are understood and also integrated. We are an operational team, meticulous in our planning and manage the UoL community’s experience of the facilities and spaces and the development of those spaces. We also create development programmes and interventions to support staff, students and the local community to maximise their own path to wellbeing through physical activity.



Key connections to University of Leeds strategy and values:

Community
Collaboration
Culture

Supporting students in their Return to Play with LUU

Working alongside our colleagues at LUU to support students in their Return to Play.

In response to the pandemic, the Sport and Physical Activity team worked alongside colleagues at Leeds University Union and the elected Sports Rep to ensure the 8,700 students in sports and physical activity clubs had the best possible path back to activity. Drawing on LUU staff skills and knowledge of student engagement and our operational expertise, students experienced a controlled, safe return to play, driven by a determination to get everyone back doing what they loved.

Gym action plan to improve ease of use for individuals with sight impairments

A series of adaptations within The Edge facility to improve user experience and accessibility for anyone with visual impairment.

In direct response to the experiences of a colleague and gym user, a series of opportunities for improvement were put in place to better meet the needs of members.

“Sometimes it’s that straightforward. Ask how to improve things and then get it done.” Partner stakeholder

Improving staff experiences

A series of direct actions to improve the working experience of our staff.

We recognise the importance of positive working experiences of the impact we make and have implemented a series of improved working practices and conditions with staff away days, forums and awards. We also recognise the crucial role of frontline workforce in connecting with our community and have worked with them to adapt their roles and give scope to making a bigger impact on the individuals they serve.



Their quiet contribution can often go unnoticed. A can-do team, they just get it done.”

Colleague

Building skills using our expertise

For many people working in our field, it is the ability of Sport and Physical Activity to provide opportunities to build skills that sets it apart. Developing psychosocial skills and professionalism through exposure to teamwork, leadership experiences, tactical thinking, planning, and the need for self-regulation and positive habits are all possible. At SPA, there is a desire to use our expertise and skills to help others build theirs.



Key connections to University of Leeds strategy and values:

Community
Inclusivity

LEED modules

Modules with the purpose of developing skills which are directly transferable to the workplace and life beyond University.

A series of 15 discovery skills modules designed to develop students non-subject specific skills which are directly transferable to the real world, and taught through interactive methods and practical application. Popularity has grown year on year, with 300 students enrolled.

As mentioned in my report last year, the staff team go above and beyond to make the course as accessible to students as possible. Considering the impact of the pandemic on face-to-face teaching, the course team adapted their practices extremely efficiently, specifically the modules with a real practical element, to ensure the quality of provision was still maintained.

Coach scholars

A programme of development for students to support Sport and Physical Activity through the development of their coaching skills.

103 students deployed and supported in Coach Scholar roles and playing a key role in supporting other students to be physically active.

“

The Coach Scholar role enabled me to positively contribute to a community I really care about. You get a lot of personal and professional development from doing it and even though it is very hands on, I felt well supported throughout. I didn’t see giving my time as a loss at all, only a gain”

Basketball coach scholar

Creating great spaces (and making them better)

We believe that good facilities and appropriate spaces for Sport and Physical Activity make it easier for more people to be inspired and get active. Facilities at their best are activated in an engaging way to motivate the community they serve to come, visit and get involved. That’s why we plan investment into facilities far into the future and manage an ongoing activation, refurbishment and repair plan to ensure the staff, students and local community have every reason to get involved.



Key connections to University of Leeds strategy and values:

- Community
- Impact
- Inclusivity
- Collaboration

Sports Park Weetwood community development

Dedicated work programme to broaden who uses the facilities at Weetwood and continue to grow the social opportunities.

With world class facilities and several professional team partnerships, it might be a surprise to hear that the successful growth of informal competition and a developing social and community environment has been one of the most celebrated successes in recent years.

200 teams took part in netball and football social leagues last year at both Weetwood and on campus, and the supporting umpire and referee training programmes helps to make growth sustainable while creating more opportunities for skills development.

Driving quality and continuous improvement

Workplans identifying opportunities for the continuous improvement of operations and programmes, alongside a clear facility refurbishment plan safeguards quality for future generations.

Throughout all our work, we constantly strive to identify in space for learning, understand the needs of our members while maintaining quality of experience. And despite all the disruptions, customer service accreditation was completed and refurbishment continues, to ensure we serve todays members and partners well.

Planning to provide great experiences in the future

A Masterplan for facility development which anticipates future needs and continues to put the requirements of staff, students and the local community at the heart of the investment.

Despite all the disruption created during 2020 and 2021, the team driving the long term £40 million Facilities Masterplan continued to work hard and keep development moving forward.

In August 2021, the Masterplan remained on track as work began at our £8.4m football development at Bodington, funded in partnership with the FA, Premier League and Football Foundation.

Our newest facility project is all electric, designed with Passivhaus principles, and the Biodiversity project developed at the Bodington site aims to encourage people to be active through outdoors on-field studies at home rather than overseas.

“

They seem to really care what members think. It’s a really great experience.”

Staff Edge member

Removing barriers to belonging

Participating in Sport and Physical Activity can create a sense of belonging irrespective of the activity. Regular gym users, club members, and team sports competitors can all experience a sense of being part of a wider group. Sometimes, barriers can get in the way of peoples ability to participate robbing them of the opportunity to be part of something bigger within the community. We work hard to identify these issues, connect with staff and students to understand barriers and then act as far as is possible to remove them from the path to participation.



Key connections to University of Leeds strategy and values:

- Community
- Culture
- Compassion
- Inclusivity

Finding ways to include staff and students beyond Leeds

A series of virtual challenge events that has become increasingly popular in recent times with specific challenges targeted at alumni.

COVID-related disruption may have created challenges, but it also came with opportunities including clear space to think differently about engaging with staff and students beyond Leeds specific facilities. And when over 100 alumni signed up for the first targeted challenge it became clear there was a demand to reconnect with the University from elsewhere in the UK or world.

Supporting international students to connect with Leeds

A physical activity programme part-funded by Spirit of 2012 aiming to support people to engage with outdoor space whilst getting active in simple ways.

Working in partnership with the International Student Office and Study Abroad Office, the Get Out, Get Active project exceeded targets and has provided a range of opportunities specifically designed for and targeted at international students, including walks in local countryside and climbing sessions outside of term-time creating space and place for international students to make connections.

Growing participation in rugby

Increasing participation in rugby for women at Leeds

Womens participation in rugby has continued to grow year on year, well supported by opportunities in touch rugby, and a growing squad of players seeking development opportunities and a thriving social environment.



We have no targets. I just want to get everyone out there playing and we are not focused on positions. If we finish top, we finish top. If we finish bottom, we finish bottom... Yes, I want us to be the best, but I want to produce good people and good rugby players on the back of it”

Head of Rugby

Making a positive impact on the wider Leeds community

Sport and Physical Activity plays a unique role in the relationship between University and local community, and aims to flex to provide what the community needs and work with them to develop future plans. The relationship touchpoints are numerous and range from developing, maintaining and providing access to world-class facilities, and partnering to create and manage community clubs through to creating skilled volunteering programmes to support local schools and community groups. The local community are our members, our development partners and our friends and we are proud of what we can do to support their wellbeing and their ambitions for the city.



Key connections to University of Leeds strategy and values:

- Culture
- Impact
- Collaboration

Eight years on – a maturing relationship

Since 2013, we have worked with Leeds Boat Club to develop a thriving rowing community and support their ambitions.

The relationship between Leeds Rowing Club and University partners has resulted in a thriving local base for the Leeds rowing community. Stourton Boathouse, a £1m facility designed to give the University club a home and support local Leeds residents onto the water. Eight years on the partnership continues with the Sport and Physical Activity team providing support, guidance and a partnering role in the governance of the club.

Students connecting with the local community

Gryphons in the Community (GitC) is a volunteering programme supporting students to gain new skills, develop professional literacy and give to the local community.

Each year, GitC recruits students from across the University and creates opportunities for community impact in local organisations, ranging from sports facilitation to coaching and leadership. In many of these roles, student impact far exceeds the initial plan, with students finding meaningful ways to connect with participants and bring their skills to the community.



The way she ran the last session, you would have thought she’d been doing it for years. You should be really proud of her.”

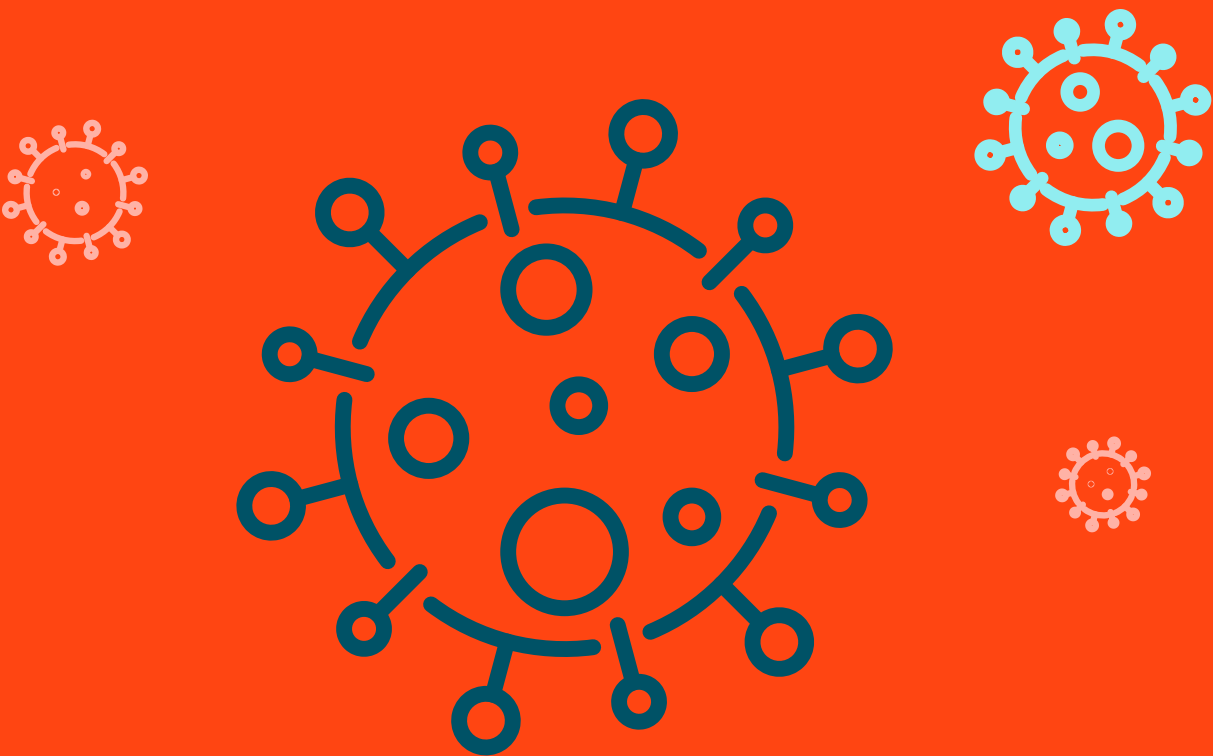
GitC partner organisation

I would recommend the programme as it is a good way of volunteering... I felt at ease knowing that if I had any issues or questions then I had someone at the University that I could go to and get them resolved.”

GitC student volunteer

Caring for our University of Leeds community – an ongoing response to COVID-19

In March 2020, life changed for everyone in the UK. Since then, the Sport and Physical Activity team, like all teams at Leeds, have had to adapt, draw on their skills and experience and be resourceful to maintain their mission to make being active accessible, and to keep the community around them well.



Adapting and supporting

Almost immediately after the working from home directive was put in place, the team at SPA were identifying digital tools, content and support materials to make freely available to staff and students. We streamed live classes and opened the Your Home, Your Move hub to anyone who wanted to access it. From running apps for your phone to mindfulness and stretching videos, support was available almost immediately. Once tools were accessible the team focused on motivating and engaging staff and students through interactive challenges, including step counts and virtual relays targeted at everyone from staff and students to Alumni and the local community.

Stepping up

In late 2020, it became clear that to safely support students returning home, there would be a need for additional asymptomatic testing spaces within the University. Drawing on their operational, facilities and events expertise, the Sport and Physical Activity team pivoted once more to redeploy their operational skills to enable 1000's of students to be tested and safely return home to loved ones.

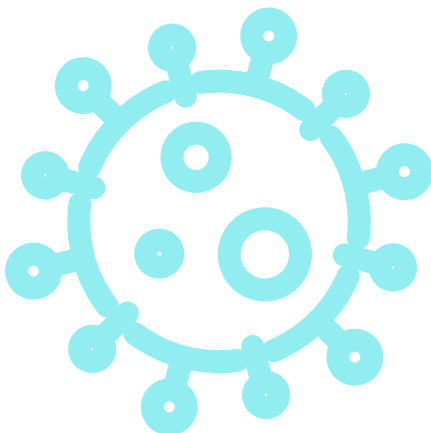
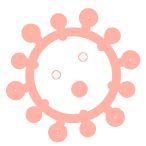
Welcoming us back

Working closely with our colleagues at Leeds University Union to safely enable a return to play and being active has required meticulous planning, attention to detail and maintenance of standards. Whether ensuring safe environments for our student clubs, colleagues, Olympic athletes, students or each other, the team has worked closely with our colleagues and continued to calmly but determinedly find ways to keep the community safe whilst maximising opportunities to get back to physical activity and sport.



You could just see they really cared.”

Consultation participant – staff



Spaces to improve

Whilst Sport and Physical Activity has been a powerful force for good at the University of Leeds over the last 3 years, significant challenges remain. Here we examine three of the most immediate challenges and explore how they may prevent the full potential of impact being realised.

Perceptions of ‘being sporty’ and ‘sport’

Narrow and negative perceptions of what it means to engage in sport or ‘be sporty’ remain.

Throughout the consultation, the language of ‘sport’ and ‘being sporty’ elicited strong responses with multiple individuals acknowledging their relatively high level of activity but not being comfortable or personally identifying in any way, with the term ‘sporty’ and that ‘sport’ is for those who are (or were) ‘sporty’.

Sports provision at University of Leeds spans a wide range of standards and levels of commitment, with 8,700 members of LUU Gryphon clubs and over 200 teams playing in organised social leagues alone. Further, since at least 2014, the focus has been shifting significantly towards growing the appeal, access and engagement levels in physical activity and sport, as well as helping individuals thrive, rather than sport and any specific competition result style performance objectives.

Despite this, it seems that even for those playing semi-regular sports in a socially competitive environment, perceptions may remain that organised, competitive activity in ‘sport’ is only for those few people who consider themselves ‘sporty’.

To improve access and engagement with sports activities, especially clubs, we have to either change the perceptions of what it means to engage in ‘sport’ and be ‘sporty’, bring more transparency and awareness of what kinds of activity takes place within sports clubs and groups or find more relatable language that doesn’t discourage potential participants and collaborators. Additionally, the opportunity to support physical activity and sport in non-sport specific groups (eg academic student societies and faith-based groups) may provide an additional route to engagement.

Spaces to improve

From asking to amplifying and creating space

The role of the student voice in creating and delivering physical activity and sport can be grown.

Despite significant effort to hear and act on participant feedback, including introducing new club satisfaction surveys and increased member engagement, there is more to do. There is a particular need to create space for students to develop ideas and plans for Sport and Physical Activity at the University and to be invited to work directly with the service to execute these plans as is done successfully elsewhere in the University. With over 10,000 members of LUU clubs and societies with some form of physical activity theme* the opportunity is huge, and the almost unique environment provided by a Union structure that fully supports, houses and champions all student led societies and clubs creates room for more ambitious approaches to collaboration. Further, targeted support for student sport leaders and committees in developing their leadership and management skills could be instrumental in both dismantling invisible exclusionary practices, and helping to shape plans for the students of the future.

*Total membership from all physical activity groups 10,171 members (92 total physical activity clubs includes 72 Gryphon clubs)

Tackling representation, improving inclusion

Despite the efforts made, significant work remains to improve inclusion and demonstrably encourage diversity.

Whilst there are some good examples of inclusive action and the hard work continues, including clear planning and action on improving facilities to be more accessible, progress on tackling some areas of inequality has yet to make a meaningful impact. Therefore in 2021, a report was specifically commissioned Improving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across the service which identified a clear plan for strategic, operational and management action, designed specifically for the Sport and Physical Activity service. With this clear guidance, the challenge remains to create focus, drive and momentum to execute the plan in full and improve diversity in the workforce and in participation such that it is more representative of the University population. To enable this to take place, we must work with the Equality and Inclusion framework and each of the themes, and utilise existing data and research to better understand the scale of the issues.



With thanks

We would like to thank all our partners, members, participants, staff and volunteers and everyone across the University of Leeds community who we have the opportunity to work with, support and collaborate with.

We'd especially like to thank those from inside and beyond the University of Leeds community, whose thoughtful and candid sharing of their experiences and reflections of Sport and Physical Activity over the last three years has helped us to compile this Impact Report and develop our thinking about the future. We are committed to the continuation of this collaborative approach and finding the best ways to engage with individuals and groups within and beyond the University and will continue to look for ways to engage in the near future.

What happens next

This report provides the foundations for us to consider the current state and continuing challenges.

The next step will be to develop a strategy for the coming years that can play a role in delivering the wider University strategy and support our colleagues within the University of Leeds and our peers in Sport and Physical Activity to deliver on their ambitions. To begin with, building an understanding of the future aims and strategies of those we seek to support will be key. So one step will be to seek the engagement of our colleagues in several other teams, beginning with the team at Leeds University Union, who we hope can support our desire to build a strategy that meets the needs and expectations of our students and better shape the engagement process to enable students to fully participate. We are committed to seeking multiple opportunities to engage with students, staff and the local community throughout the development and encourage those interested, to contact us for more information on how to get involved.

Working with us

Throughout this report we have shared how we work in partnerships with other teams within the University and beyond.



“

They support us in the way we ask them to. They give us what we need to do what we want.”

Project Partner

We are always keen to discuss with academic and professional colleagues how Sport and Physical Activity can help to achieve their ambitions, whether it is through creating activities that foster a sense of belonging, supporting healthy lifestyle choices to enable better wellbeing for students and staff or creating new ways of preparing students for the future through volunteering.

If you want to talk to the team about how to support your staff and students or have a local community project you'd like to discuss, contact us using the details below.

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