



# Evaluation Report

## Somerset Smokefree Sports Club Grants

### 2014/15

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Contents	Page
Executive Summary	2
Background	3
Meeting the need	4
Brief Intervention Training	5
Smokefree policy implementation	6
Measuring the impact	7
Visit to Frome Canoe Club	10
Visit to Wellington Cricket Club	11
Grants awarded	12
Grants by district and sport	13

## Executive Summary

The Somerset Smokefree Sports Club Grants initiative was devised following discussions between Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) and the Smokefree Somerset Alliance (SSA) in an attempt to engage existing organisations to promote one of the main aims of the Alliance, namely the prevention and reduction of smoking in young people.

The evaluation is based on a questionnaire sent to all clubs taking part (52), and **three/four** group visits. It considers the background, aims and objectives of the grants programme, and presents the scheme's take up and impact, and concludes that the Smoke Free objectives were well met through the programme. The grants programme has helped to de-normalise smoking by adults on the touchlines at sporting venues and by educating children and young people about the dangers of smoking.

The programme was officially launched in October 2014 and was designed to change group behaviours by incentivising sports clubs to adopt no-smoking policies when youth activities were taking place. The flat-rate grants of £500 were also conditional upon at least one member of the club attending a free brief intervention training session where smokefree messages could be learnt and passed on to younger members.

There were no restrictions imposed on the use of the grant, which SCF considers has contributed to the success of the programme. It has helped to break the link between earlier more prescriptive and restricted smokefree programmes, which had not fully engaged community groups previously.

The majority of the clubs spent their grant on improving club facilities, purchasing equipment and/or kit, offering extra coaching sessions to increase opportunities for young people to participate in club activities or training for coaches. In some cases the unrestricted funds were used on specialist equipment to enable sport to be accessible to people with learning and physical disabilities.

The initiative has sparked a lively debate amongst members and was not universally welcomed at first. However, participation in the scheme has afforded the clubs a certain authority in the implementation, promotion and policing of the policy. As a result, all of the clubs (who have reported back) have implemented the policy and SCF has received several approaches from other sports clubs wishing to participate in the next round, should this be approved by SSA.

**Key facts:**

- 52 grants made totalling £26,000
- 8,000 club members (5,000+ aged under 16) were reached
- 76 individuals attended brief intervention training sessions
- 86.5% of clubs have reported back to SCF (to date)
- 100% of these clubs have adopted and are enforcing the smokefree policy
- 70% of these clubs have had no difficulties in implementing the policy
- 2 clubs considering implementing a blanket smokefree policy
- Individuals influenced to cease smoking following training sessions

**Background**

The Smokefree Somerset Alliance (SSA) is led by representatives from Somerset County Council, District Councils, Yeovil and Taunton NHS Foundation Trusts, Smokefreelife Somerset, the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Somerset College, the British Heart Foundation, the British Lung Foundation and Avon and Somerset Police.

Following discussions between representatives of the SSA and Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) in March 2012, we agreed that SCF would deliver a £40,000 grants programme over three years (subject to review) to fund voluntary sector projects consistent with the aims of the SSA. Support costs were agreed at 10%.

SCF administration of the Smokefree Somerset Grants Programme was set up to target two key areas of concern:

- The uptake of smoking by young people, and
- Smoking during pregnancy, particularly in young women who do not necessarily access traditional health services such as antenatal classes.

In November 2013 the Smokefree Somerset Alliance Grants Programme was officially launched. This took the form of a two pronged approach with grants available for

community groups to cover the costs of delivering a series of Toxic Tobacco Truth Workshops and/or projects tackling the issues around young women smoking in pregnancy.

However, uptake proved to be very poor with just two youth groups receiving grants to deliver the workshops. In response, SCF commissioned Somerset Rural Youth Project (SRYP) to deliver a series of ten workshops to affiliated youth groups throughout the county. This approach also unfortunately failed, with SRYP reporting that they were unable to engage the target audience due to the unsuitability of the resource for use in an out-of-school environment. As a result, only two full series of workshops have been delivered and the funding has been withdrawn.

Following discussions between SSA and SCF, we felt that the criteria of the grants programme as it stood was proving to be too prescriptive for community groups to fully engage with the aims of the programme. We agreed, therefore, that a different approach was needed and the programme in this format was suspended.

### Meeting the need

Smoking is by far the largest cause of premature death and morbidity nationally, and approximately 80,000 people in Somerset still smoke.

Over 850 Somerset residents die each year from smoking-related illnesses (in comparison, road accidents kill approx 35 people). An estimated £6.9million in care costs from Somerset County Council budgets is due to the effects of smoking on health.

At present over 1,600 young people aged between 11 and 15 take up smoking every year in Somerset. Two thirds of current smokers started before the age of 18. Aside from the obvious health issues, smoking can aggravate poverty in poorer areas where smoking is more prevalent. Two smoking adults within a family can spend over £5,000 a year on tobacco, effectively diverting it from local goods and services and adversely affecting the local economy as well as disposable income for the family.

The ability to reach young people, and adults in the wider family and community, in order to prevent the uptake of smoking cannot be underestimated in helping to reduce these statistics.

### Brief Intervention Training

Training sessions for members of all 52 clubs took place in January/February 2015 at sports venues in Taunton, Shepton Mallet, Bridgwater and Minehead. Sessions were delivered jointly by SCC Tobacco Control Specialist and Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership.

*"As a teacher working in a secondary school, it gave me a lot of ammunition to use with some of the teenagers there too!"*

Feedback on the training sessions was very positive with 93% of groups finding it very useful. The majority of groups stated that the training was delivered in a fun and informative fashion and that it was clear and easy to understand. There were some comments about the unsuitability of the venues, which will need to be addressed for any future training events.

The sessions included discussions around the negative short and long-term effects of smoking and how it affects fitness levels and performance. This included a section on warm-up activities, which gave participants practical ways to get the messages across to young people. Further facts and statistics were provided on the financial costs, the dangers of secondhand smoke and the myths around smoking. Information was also given on how to implement and promote the smokefree policy at their clubs, including advice on how to approach smokers.

*"When the anti-smoking messages from the training were relayed to junior members, they were quite shocked."*

The coaches were then expected to incorporate the messages they received into the coaching sessions which they run with young people. This created a potentially large audience, with the number of youth members of the clubs participating totalling over 5,000.

*"A well thought out presentation and a real eye opener."*

### Smokefree Policy Implementation

To date, SCF has received 45 reports back from the sports clubs who took part in the programme (86.5% of grant recipients). All of these have adopted a smokefree policy (whilst young people are taking part in sport) and all are using the wall and pitch-side signs provided.

*"We make sure that the signs are out every time that we are training and have matches taking place, and ensure that they are displayed prominently so that everyone can see them."*

Thirty of the groups (68%) are regularly issuing verbal announcements at the beginning of sessions and twenty two clubs (48%) are using their website to promote the policy. In addition, the clubs have used a variety of other ways to communicate the new policy and messages are relayed during the training to their members and guests.

Many clubs contacted their members directly via e-mail and post, informing them of the changes, enclosing a copy of the smokefree policy. Others made announcements through their club newsletters, and social media has also been widely used to reach their younger members. Other methods have included incorporating the logo and smokefree message on registration forms and club hand-books etc.

*"At first, some parents simply ignored our signs and smoked. However during our Summer Tournament it was noticed that people were choosing to smoke away from the pitches."*

Avishayes Combe Youth FC use Combe St Nicholas FC facilities so the grant has helped to part fund a portable dugout that will allow them to advertise the smokefree message and Bridgwater Netball Club have purchased new banners to display around their outside courts, which will include the Smokefree Sports Clubs logo.



## Measuring the impact

The programme has started a lively debate amongst participating club members, whose numbers total approximately 8,000 across the whole of Somerset, with over 5,000 members aged under 16. The overall impression from the feedback appears to be that previous attempts to implement smokefree policies have not been successful due to resistance from particularly vocal smoking members.

*“Implementing the policy has highlighted to members how important it is to behave appropriately around the younger members as they can influence attitude/behaviour.”*

Over 70% of groups (35) reported that there were no difficulties in implementing the policy. Some of the groups, however, reported resistance to the changes from visitors, parents and adult members of clubs but that they were now adhering to the restrictions.

Overall feedback on the impact, however, has largely been very positive, with younger members actively encouraging the smoking ban and using the information filtered down to them via the training sessions to spread the message about the dangers of smoking in general.

As an example, the young people at Frome Canoe Club chose and prepared articles for the March and April Newsletters entitled “The cost of smoking” and “How many chemicals do you think are in a cigarette?” respectively. Additionally, the young players at Ashcott Football Club and Tor Rugby Club are helping to enforce the policy themselves by informing smoking adults of the smokefree policy, with the support of their coaches.

*“As a result of seeing the smokefree signs at our Club, and hearing about the initiative from us, other local sports clubs have also implemented the same policy.”*

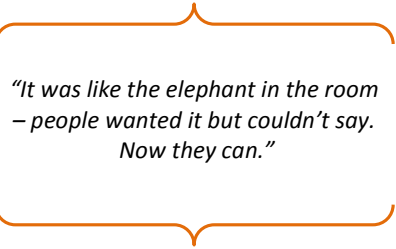
The message has also been spread to the wider community via visiting teams and SCF has received several enquiries from clubs who would like to participate in the next round, should this go ahead.

Another unexpected outcome has emerged with the initiative prompting adult individuals within at least two clubs to try to give up smoking, in order to present a better example to the young people.



Many of the clubs are run by volunteers who have also been using the knowledge gained at the training sessions to educate other young people in environments outside of the sports clubs, spreading the message even wider.

The discussions that some clubs have had with club members has also resulted in otherwise relatively unengaged people coming forward in support of the policy, and becoming more involved with the organisation in general.



*"It was like the elephant in the room  
– people wanted it but couldn't say.  
Now they can."*

The initiative has afforded clubs a certain authority in the implementation, promotion and policing of the policy, which was previously lacking. This has highlighted a definite need for the programme in order to assist clubs who have previously wished to put these policies in place, but have not had the resources or the full support of all their members in order to do so.

By participating in this programme and gaining help and support to implement the policy through the provision of training, signage, logos and a template policy, it has empowered committees to enforce the change and to start a conversation with their members towards becoming totally smokefree.

As a result Taunton Rugby Football Club and Ilton Cricket Club are currently discussing introducing a smokefree policy for adult matches, which could have a greater impact on the health of all members and supporters of the club. This in turn could have a further knock-on effect with visiting teams and supporters.

The injection of this non-restricted tranche of funding has also enabled some clubs to expand their activities to make sport more accessible to people with disabilities and the wider community.

The Victoria Park Community Cycling Club used their grant as a contribution towards the cost of buying two tricycles, enabling delivery of an inclusive outreach cycling project in partnership with Victoria Park Community Centre, 1610 Leisure Trust, Sedgemoor District Council and Somerset County Council. As a direct result they are currently delivering cycling skills activity sessions at Chilton Trinity Sports Centre for people with both learning and physical disabilities.

The Taunton Adventurous Sports and Canoe Club bought a 2 man sit on top kayak to be used by people with special educational needs.

The grants programme has fulfilled the main aims behind the smokefree sports club initiative by de-normalising smoking by adults on the touchlines at sporting venues and by educating children and young people about the dangers of smoking.

All of these outcomes (both expected and otherwise) help to illustrate the need for the programme and are consistent with the aims of the SSA. The programme also demonstrates how a small unrestricted grant can go a long way to make a difference to people's health and wellbeing, which is also consistent with the aims of SCF.



## Visit to Frome Canoe Club



*"It has definitely made me ensure I smoke further away from the club if I do so at all."*  
Parent

*"People die early if they smoke, and I hate it anyway because of the smell!"*  
Young person

*"Useful messages from the training on how smoking won't help you in our sport."*  
Coach

Senior Programmes Manager at SCF, Tessa Hibbert, visited the Frome Canoe Club on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and spoke with the club leader and coach, a parent and a young person taking part in the activities.

The coaches have felt confident in implementing the policy and have found the signage very useful as they display it prominently around the river. All staff and volunteers received a relayed session on 'approaching smokers' and are comfortable enforcing the policy. It has made a significant difference. When adults have started to smoke at events, a polite reminder has generally worked and parents who do smoke are now not smoking near the club.

Other information from the training was relayed to all coaches and members at a staff meeting and was discussed with the young people of the steering committee. The coaches include reference to the benefits of not smoking in their Passport and Discover courses, using selected slides from the presentation provided at the brief intervention training session. Smoking statistics are included in the quiz element of the courses.

### Visit to Wellington Cricket Club

Public Health Specialist, Stewart Brock from Somerset County Council visited Wellington Cricket Club on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015 and spoke with the club chairman, two coaches, a few parents and a young person taking part in the activities.

The Smokefree sports signage was permanently affixed to the front of the pavilion building, making the commitment to Smokefree sports very prominent. The chairman and coaches reported that anyone wishing to smoke left the pavilion area, smoking well away from and behind the pavilion so as not to be visible to young people participating in sport. Previously, smoking took place in front of the pavilion. Coaches reported being comfortable with enforcing the policy, with no real difficulties experienced in doing so.

Parents were aware of the policy from the signage, but did not recall any other communication about the policy when it was introduced, for example in emails or newsletters from the club. The policy is not on the club website. The coaches advised that they had been briefed on the policy, but neither of them was aware of the coaching materials, and the training for coaches had not been cascaded to them. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the young person spoken to did not recall smoking being mentioned as part of coaching sessions at all. No further young people were interviewed as it was evident that the coaches could not have delivered the Smokefree coaching or used the warm-up materials.

The coaches felt it would be useful to have the coaching materials available on line together with the training slides, so that coaches and coach helpers could make use of them. One also suggested that sports governing bodies should be on board with this initiative to drive adoption across all clubs.

## Grants Awarded - February 2015

AFC Camel	Dunster Youth FC	Shepton Mallet Hockey Club
Ashcott Football Club	Frome Canoe Club	Som Youth & Community Sailing
Avishayes Combe Youth FC	Frome Collegians	Sydenham Netball Club
Bagborough Cricket Club	Frome Netball Club	Taunton Adventurous Sports
Batcombe Cricket Club	Frome Town Ladies FC	Taunton Athletic Club
Bowmen of Danesfield	Frome Town Robins	Taunton Civil Service Hockey
Bridgwater Cricket Club	Galmington Netball Club	Taunton RFC
Bridgwater Netball Club	Glastonbury Cricket Club	Tone Youth Football Club
Bruton Hockey Club	Huish & Langport Cricket Club	Tor Rugby Club
Bruton United FC	Ilminster Cricket Club	Victoria Park Community Cycling
Burnbridge Wanderers JFC	Ilton Cricket Club	Wembdon FC
Burnham Hockey Club	Isle of Wedmore Junior FC	Wellington AFC
Castle Cary RFC	Keinton Mandeville Netball	Wellington Cricket
Chard Cricket Club	Kilve Cricket Club	Wells Cricket Club
Chard Hockey Club	Langport Runners	Yeovil Netball Club
Cheddar Valley RFC	Milverton Football Club	Yeovil Olympiads
Cheddar Valley Youth Hockey	Minehead Ladies Hockey	
Crowcombe Cricket Club	Shapwick & Polden Cricket	

