

People and Places

The story of doing it differently



We wanted to understand how working with places could address the stubborn inequalities that exist among the least active and in 2016, we invited communities from all over England to test a new way of working with us by becoming one of 12 'local delivery pilots'.

People and Places is the story of our journey over the past four years. In it, we share the challenges and successes of implementing a new way of working and explain why we're more convinced than ever about the power of sometimes small steps to make a big difference to people's lives.



This is the **story** of our work so far

The need for change

Our work started with the humbling realisation that despite making some great progress as an organisation, one in four adults were still missing out on the benefits of physical activity. To get a different result, we'd need to change what we were doing.

Take a look at how we started to explore a placed-based systems approach

Doing things differently

We knew we wanted to do things differently but didn't know what that would look like or even what needed to change. For an organisation used to leading from the front, it was unnerving to admit that this time, we didn't have all the answers.

Here's what we are learning are the key agents for change

Taking the first steps

As we began to co-design approaches with the pilots, we realised that nearly all of our tools and methods would have to be re-examined. So we started with questions and pushed aside any assumptions about what success might look like. Building and directing momentum from within communities is vital, but without the support of stakeholders it can quickly fade. Promoting distributed leadership can be a challenge, but it's one that has been essential to enabling system change.

Discover how our understanding of leadership has changed through this journey

Becoming the change you want to see

We are all influenced by lots of different factors that surround us in our daily lives. All these influencing factors need to work together as a 'system' if we're going to help foster positive change. This is a big job. And we knew it would need new ways of working and new ways of demonstrating value. But we hadn't bargained on just how much of this change had to start with us.

See how the pilots have begun to embed physical activity across the layers of the system

Learning is the doing

It's no accident that the places we're working with are called pilots. Sharing key learnings is central to the pilots' work. We're learning from each other's experiences, and we're collecting learnings about system change in different locations.

Explore the principles that have guided our learning

- Progress moves at the speed of trust
- Stubborn on the vision, flexible on the detail
- Holding our nerve
- Bridging the empathy gap
- Say 'yes' to the mess
- Going where the energy is
- We can't solve problems with the same mindset that created them

The practicalities of system change

We still don't have all the answers, but what we have found is that it's 'how' the work is done that unlocks progress. Common themes and learnings have emerged across the pilots and we've shared these new approaches, tips and techniques along the way. We also hope that these learnings can help others as they embark on their own change journey.

Learn how pilots have put these ways of working into practice

- Shared purpose
- Understanding the lived experience
- Distributed leadership
- Capacity and time to reflect
- Test and learn
- Power shift
- Having the right conversations
- Understanding the system you're trying to shape
- Start with questions, not answers

Understanding value

A key challenge of taking a systemic approach is how you understand and show that valuable change is happening. And we've come to understand that complex outcomes require a nuanced view of value and a shift away from traditional measures of progress.

Understand how we are starting to redefine value and the behaviours and principles that enable this

Looking forward

Over four years of honest conversations, co-creation, personal evaluation, changing working practices and new ways of thinking, we've learnt that change isn't always easy. We've learnt that there is no single blueprint for achieving whole system change, but we are convinced that if we continue to build on the momentum of the lessons learnt through the pilots, we have a real chance to achieve lasting change and foster self-sufficiency within communities by working collaboratively with them.

There's plenty

more journey to come

Read the full story at sportengland.org/localdelivery

