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PARTICIPATION

# Community Coaching Programme - Evaluation Report

June 2019



Crowe



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# Executive Summary

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## 1.1 Overview

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The purpose of this document is to provide an outcome and process evaluation of the 2016 and 2017 Community Coaching programmes for Sport Ireland which Crowe was commissioned to carry out following a tender process.

The Community Coaching Programme is rolled out through the Local Sports Partnership (LSP) network and was originally aimed to 'target jobseekers from disadvantaged population groups'. Sport Ireland has invested in the programme through support of the Dormant Accounts Fund and the programme was implemented across 17 counties in Ireland during the two years being evaluated.

The evaluation aims to examine the **extent to which the intended outcome of the programme** was achieved and examines **how the programme was delivered** across the LSPs.

## 1.2 Methodology

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Following a review of Sport Ireland's pre-existing datasets, the final consultation process decided upon, in conjunction with Sport Ireland, included an LSP survey, a focus group with LSPs and course coordinators and 13 individual interviews.

## 1.3 Key Learnings: Outcomes Learnings

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The key outcome learnings focus on the context and factors influencing programme success in achieving the intended outcome. The intended outcome of the programme was to assist unemployed people to: gain employment, become a coach, become a volunteer, or go on to higher education in the sports sector.

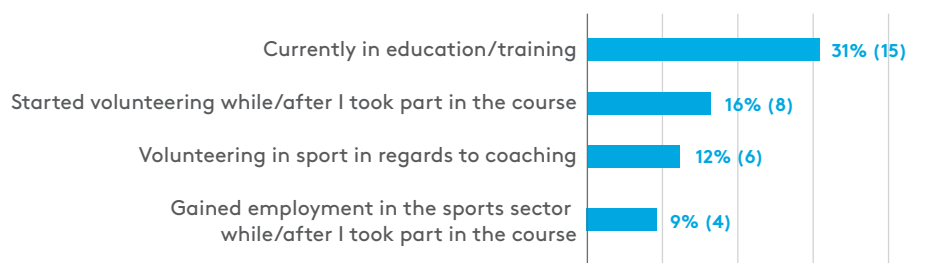
**51% of the 49 individuals who responded to the 3-month post course completion survey achieved one or more of the four outcomes.**

While the task of unpacking the individual outcomes is complex, a general insight is provided within the report from the 3-month post course completion survey that 51% of individuals who responded had achieved one or more of the four outcomes. Of those who provided data on progression, 31% (n=15) indicated they were in further education, 16% (n=8) that they were volunteering, 12% (n=6) that they were volunteering as a coach and 9% (n=4) that they had gained employment. It should be noted, however, that these figures include instances where one individual achieved a number of outcomes.

<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that these figures include where one individual achieved a number of outcomes

## Current Situation - Capacity Increase

### 3 Month Post Course Completion - Multiple Choice for 49 Participants



## 1.4 Key Learnings: Process Learnings

Key learnings from the various phases of the programme are presented in response to the questions outlined in the evaluation's terms of reference.

### Fidelity

Overall, as indicated in the Crowe LSP survey, the programme was delivered in a manner as designed and intended. Outlined differences in approach to programme delivery can be largely attributed to the LSPs existing structures, geography/geographical spread of the programme's modules, availability of and access to necessary resources and the LSPs relationship with partner organisations/NGBs and hosts.

### Reach

Overall, it was felt that most LSPs could recruit sufficient numbers for their programmes. Recruiting both individuals and relevant organisations onto the programme relied heavily on existing networks and relationships.

### Exposure

Overall attendance for each course was high; however, there are inconsistencies across the different modules and sports coach training generally secured the highest level of attendance and engagement.

Module	Average	Max
Job Readiness	80%	100%
Personal Development	82.50%	100%
Sports Coach Training	90%	100%
Physical Activity Training	85%	100%
Placement Experience	85%	100%
Other Module	85%	100%

### Retention

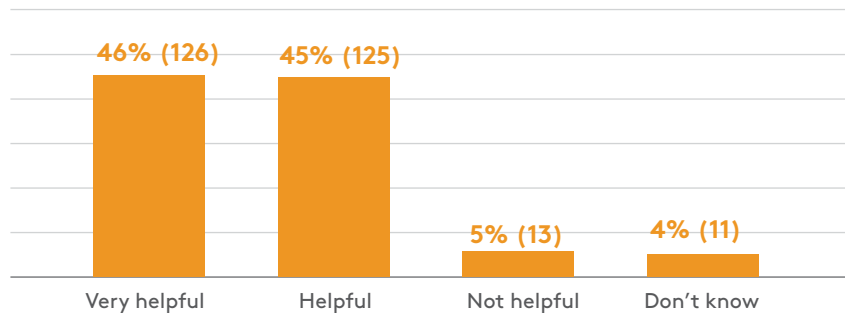
In the three months' post course completion survey (49 responses), 88% (n=43) of participants completed the programme. Similarly, in the end of programme questionnaire (275 responses), 79% (n=216) of participants indicated they took part in all aspects of the programme. The single biggest influencing factor on whether or not participant's completed the programme was individual motivations and needs and the mix of individuals within the group.

## Relevance

In the participant end of programme questionnaire, participants were asked to rate the level of 'helpfulness' of various aspects of the programme. The breakdowns are depicted in the following graphs and show, in general, high levels of positive feedback.

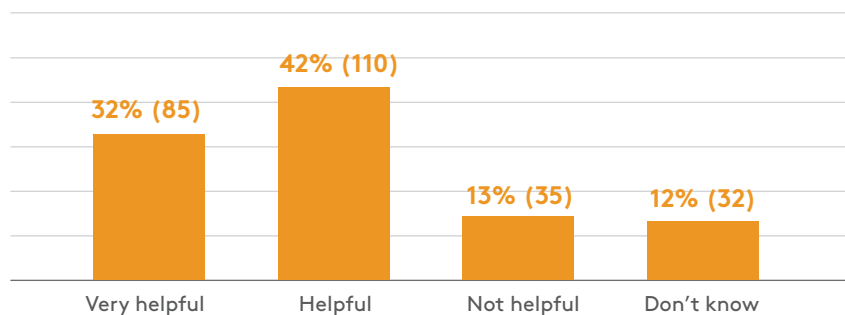
### Job Readiness Skills

End of Programme Participant Questionnaire - 275 Responses



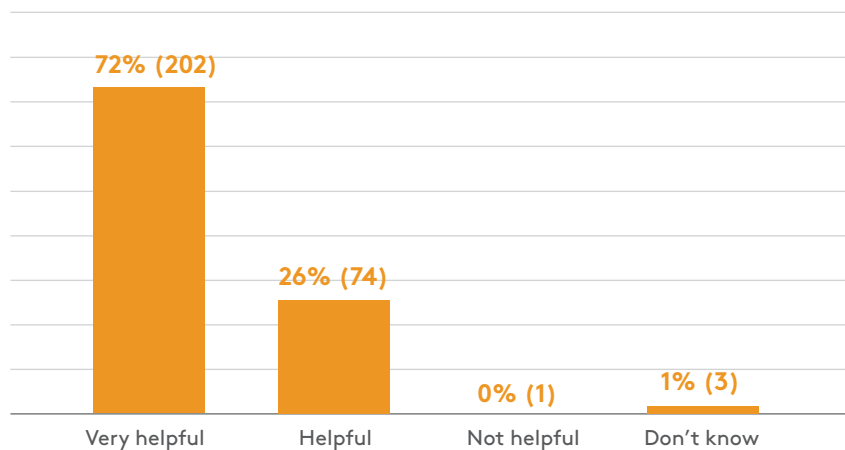
### Job Placement Skills

End of Programme Participant Questionnaire - 262 Responses



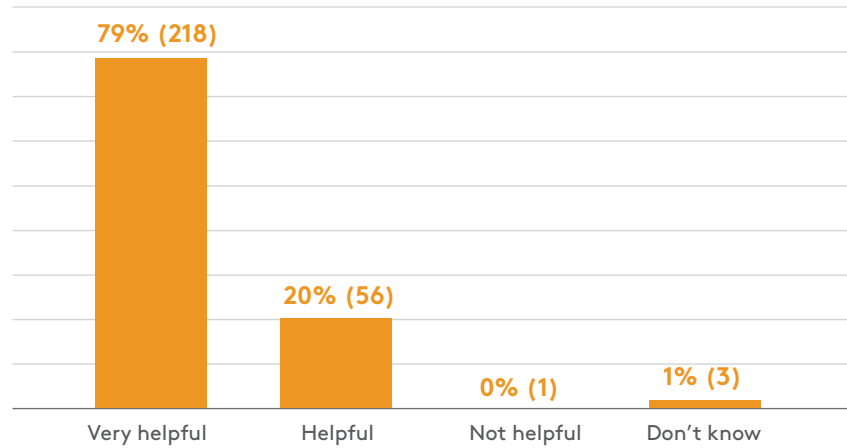
### Sports Coaching Training

End of Programme Participant Questionnaire - 280 Responses



### Physical Activity Training

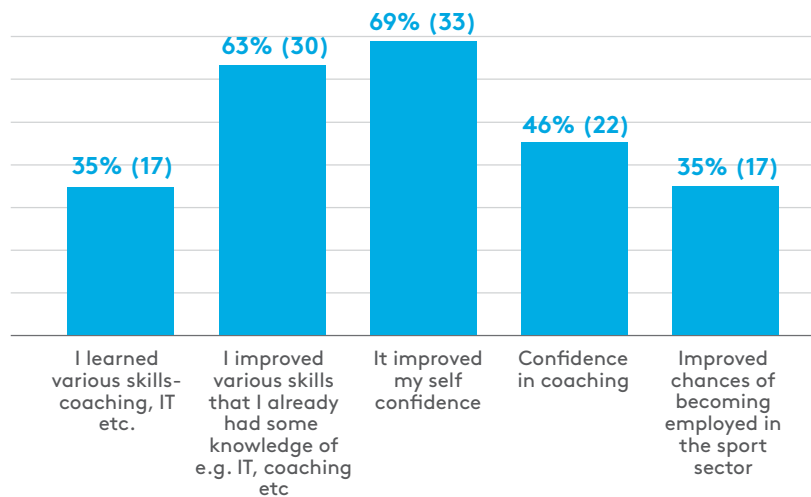
End of Programme Participant Questionnaire - 277 Responses



Three months' post course completion participants were also asked what areas they found useful by taking part in the community coaching programme. Answers are depicted below.

### How did taking part in the community coaching programme help you?

3 Month Post Course Completion - Multiple Choice for 49 Participants



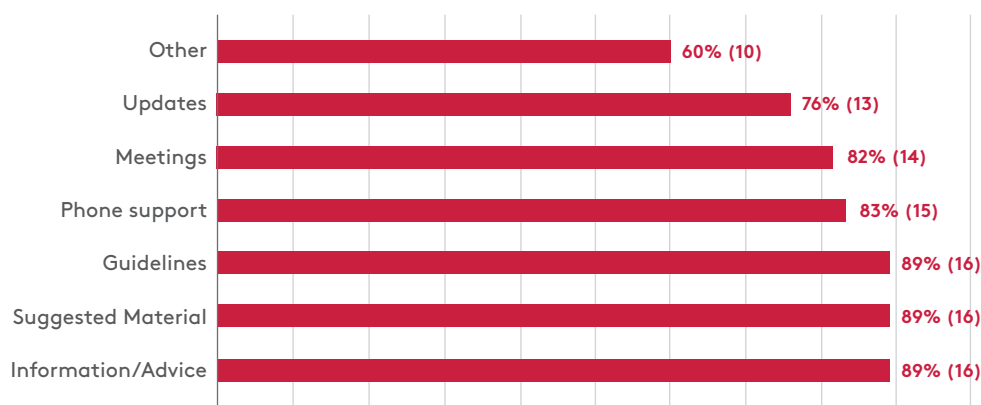


### Supports Provided

Overall, it was felt that sufficient support was provided by Sport Ireland to the LSPs, in particular in relation to information/advice, suggested model and guidelines

### Did Sport Ireland provide sufficient supports in the following areas?

*Crowe LSP Survey - Multiple Choice for 19 LSPs*



### Willingness to participate again/recommend

91% of LSPs reported that they would participate in the programme again. Factors identified for improvement include-

- Greater coordination with partner organisations at a national level
- Access to National branding guidelines, templates, marketing collateral etc.

100% of participants who were surveyed three months after course completion said that they would recommend the programme to people they knew were interested in coaching.

## 1.5 Conclusion

Overall, the evaluation shows that the programme was delivered as intended across the LSPs. Nuances in programme delivery can be largely attributed to adaptations based on the LSPs existing structures, geography/geographical spread of the programme's modules, availability of and access to necessary resources and the LSPs relationship with partner organisations/NGBs and hosts. In addition to this, programme delivery was, at times, adapted during implementation, in response to the participant group mix and the varied needs of each cohort.

The programme's components were tailored to support an individual in achieving one of the four outcomes. The analysis demonstrates that the perceived usefulness of the programme, for the participants, centred on sports coaching and physical activity training, as well as participant personal development.

The feedback gathered during the evaluation was positive amongst the different stakeholders i.e. participants, LSPs, NGBs, partner organisations and hosts. All stakeholders revealed encouraging experiences and noted their willingness to engage and/or promote the programme into the future. Some minor modifications and adjustments to the programme were suggested, and are noted in this report.



# 2

## Introduction

### 2.1 Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide an outcome and process evaluation of the 2016 and 2017 Community Coaching programmes for Sport Ireland which Crowe was commissioned to carry out following a tender process.

### 2.2 Background of the Community Coaching Programme

The Community Coaching Programme (hereinafter referred to as 'the programme') is rolled out through the Local Sports Partnership (LSP) network and was originally aimed to 'target jobseekers from disadvantaged population groups'. Since its inception in 2015, a total of 87 programmes have been run across the LSP network. Sport Ireland has invested in the programme through support of the Dormant Accounts Fund, and between 2016 and 2018 the programme has seen an investment of €465,000, with an average cost of €13,285 per course.

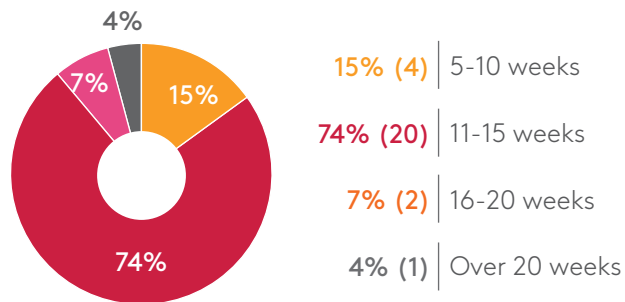
The programme was implemented across 17 counties in Ireland during the two years being evaluated (11 counties implemented the programme in both years).

#### 2.2.1 Course duration

The duration of each course was at the discretion of each LSP, with the majority ranging from 11-15 weeks at 74% (n=20) as answered in the Pre Programme Course Coordinator Survey.

#### What is the duration of the Community Coaching Programme

Pre Programme Course Coordinator Survey - 27 Respondents



#### 2.2.2 Course modules

The programme provided participants the opportunities to develop practical and theoretical sport-related skills and relevant work experience in their local community. There are five core modules, outlined below.

##### Strand 1: Job Readiness Skills Development (includes Business Development)

Course focusing on CV writing, job seeking skills, IT skills, office skills, telephone skills, etc.

##### Strand 2: Personal Development

Courses supporting the trainees to identify individual progression routes in terms of employment/self-employment, further education and training, coaching and volunteering, etc. Other aspects of personal development including confidence-building, leadership and language skills etc.

##### Strand 3: Sports Coaching Training

The majority of coaching awards are offered in sports where there are no full-time development officers within the county.

### Strand 4: Physical Activity Training

Range of courses offered including, for example, Active Leadership Award, safeguarding 1 Course, Disability Awareness Training, Occupational First Aid Certificate, Walking Leader, Fit4 Life, Go for Life PALs, etc.

### Strand 5: Job Placement Experience

A job placement programme (unpaid) is incorporated into the course structure. Work experience has been provided by National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), LSPs, clubs, schools, community centres and schools.

## 2.2.3 Profile of Participants

There was a maximum of 12 participants per course, with a range of different participant profiles i.e. gender, age, employment status etc.

According to the Participant Registration Questionnaire (2016 & 2017), which had 297 responses in total, 68% (n=203) of participants were male and 32% (n=94) were female. In terms of age, the table below highlights the age groups of the participants who responded to the registration questionnaire. The majority of participants were under 25 years old, at 34% (n=100), followed by 31-40 years old at 24% (n=70).

Age Range	Percentage
Under 25 years old	34% (n=100)
26–30 years old	11% (n=32)
31–40 years old	24% (n=70)
41–50 years old	21% (n=60)
51–60 years old	8% (n=23)
61–70 years old	2% (n=7)

## 2.3 Evaluation

The evaluation aims to examine the extent to which the intended outcome of the programme was achieved and examines how the programme was delivered across the LSPs. The evaluation addresses this by undertaking:

- An **outcome evaluation** to establish whether or not the programme was able to achieve the intended outcome of assisting unemployed people to:
  - gain employment
  - become a coach
  - become a volunteer, or,
  - go on to higher education in the sports sector
- A **process evaluation** to understand how the programme was delivered across the counties and why it did or did not achieve the anticipated outcome. Specific areas of focus of the process evaluation are:
  - **Fidelity:** Was the programme delivered in a manner as designed and intended? What were the factors that influenced this?
  - **Reach:** How well were individuals and relevant organisations recruited to the programme? What were the factors that influenced this?
  - **Exposure:** How many participants were exposed to the course and what were the rates of attendance? What were the factors that influenced this?
  - **Retention:** What percentage of participants completed the programme? What were the factors that influenced this?
  - **Satisfaction:** Level of perceived relevance and usefulness of the programme by the participants. (Note: Different from whether or not the participants 'liked' the programme.) What were the factors that influenced this?

# 3

## Evaluation Design and Methodology

### 3.1 Development of the Methodology

The design and development of the evaluation's methodology was an iterative process which took into account the data already gathered by Sport Ireland on the 2016 and 2017 programmes.

The methodology outlined in Crowe's tender proposal included an online participant survey, eight individual interviews (with various NGBs, partners and hosts) and three focus groups (which assumed one regional focus group). In agreement with Sport Ireland, this approach was revised following a review of the information presented in Sport Ireland's datasets and the documents shared.

#### 3.1.1 Documents/datasets reviewed

The research documents/datasets reviewed included:

- National Sports Policy 2018-2027
- 2016 LSP Application Forms
  - 19 applications including 'joint applications'
- 2017 LSP Application Forms
  - 16 applications including 'joint applications'
- Participant Registration Questionnaire 2016 and 2017
  - 297 participant responses
- Participant End of Programme Questionnaire 2016 and 2017
  - 278 participant responses
- 3 Month Follow Up Participants Questionnaire
  - 49 participant responses
- Course Coordinator Before Programme Questionnaire 2016 and 2017
  - 29 course coordinator responses
- Course Coordinator End of Programme Questionnaire 2016 and 2017
  - 37 course coordinator responses
- LSP Feedback
  - 21 LSP responses
- NGB Feedback
  - 78 NGB responses
- Partner Feedback
  - 25 partner responses
- Host Organisation Start of Programme Survey
  - 37 host responses
- Host Organisation End of Programme Survey
  - 37 host responses

Following a review of Sport Ireland's existing data sets, which are listed above, a gap analysis was conducted to reveal the gaps in existing datasets that would be required for the evaluation. To 'close the gaps', the final consultation process decided upon, in conjunction with Sport Ireland, included the below consultation methods.

- **Online LSP survey**

A survey of LSPs was conducted and questions were compiled in collaboration with Sport Ireland. The survey was distributed by means of an online survey tool. The survey was distributed by Crowe to Sport Ireland's LSP database and participants were asked to register their interest to partake in the survey by filling in their contact details which then enabled them to be supplied with an individual 'token' or access code.

The analysis of the LSPs was based on 19 surveys. A response rate of 95% was achieved as 20 LSPs were emailed and 19 responses were received.

- 1 LSP/course coordinator focus group
- 13 interviews across NGBs, partner organisations and hosts including:
  - **NGB:** Basketball Ireland Cork
  - **NGB:** Football Association Ireland (FAI) Mayo
  - **NGB:** Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA) Mayo
  - **NGB:** Basketball Ireland Mayo
  - **Partner/Host:** Educational Training Board (ETB) for Cavan and Monaghan
  - **Partner/Host:** Cork Sports Partnership
  - **Partner/Host:** Laois Sports Partnership
  - **Partner/Host:** Mental Health Laois
  - **Partner/Host:** Laois Sport Partnership
  - **Partner/Host:** Carlow IT
  - **Partner/Host:** Mayo North East Leader Partnership Company
  - **Partner/Host:** South West Mayo Leader Partnership
  - **Partner/Host:** Mental Health Mayo



# 4

## Limitations

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Limitations noted in relation to this body of research were as follows:

### Timeframe

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The timing of the consultation process for an evaluation is important. The length of time that had passed between the end of the programmes and the evaluation research restricted the level of consultation possible with participants and the likely accuracy of information provided now in relation to participation a number of years ago.

It was agreed that the quality of participant consultation would be negatively affected by limited participant memory. In addition to this, the participants willing to take part in the consultation process would be likely to be a more engaged group and therefore positive bias was likely.

For these reasons, it was agreed that the existing participant data (pre programme, end of programme and three-month post completion surveys) were to be analysed and used as the main source of first hand participant information. It is worth noting that because of this, the participant insights are limited to the survey topics as issued in 2016 and 2017.

### Sample Size

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The sample size refers to the number of participants included in the individual datasets. The size of the sample influences two statistical properties: the precision of estimates; and, the power of the evaluation to draw conclusions. Because of this, larger sample sizes tend to be associated with a smaller margin of error.

In terms of participant data, the three-month post completion survey was only completed by 49 participants, which is 16% of the pre-registration participant group. Therefore, comparisons made between pre- and post-completion survey responses are limited.

### Access

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Access to the different groups of stakeholders i.e. NGBs, partners and hosts was somewhat limited as some of those originally involved were no longer in post and others were not available due to commitments on current projects and an inability to be released for consultation on a past project.

### Reliance on self-reported data

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All data gathered, both pre-existing and conducted as part of this study, was self-reported and is limited in terms of not being independently verified. Furthermore, bias cannot be identified as data cannot be compared to other independent studies.

### Adaptive nature of the programme

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Situations varied in terms of participants, structure, delivery etc. that limit the ability to draw universal conclusions.

### Reliance on historical data

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All participant data comes from a point in time in 2016 and 2017 and is therefore related to the situation at the point in time the survey was completed. Clearly, their situation could have changed in the intervening period but there are no statistics to confirm or deny this assumption.

# 5

## Results and Discussions

### 5.1 Overview

This section of the report analyses the desk research and consultation process (online survey, focus group and 13 individual interviews) to assess whether or not the programme achieved its intended outcomes and to understand how the programme was delivered.

This section is followed by key learnings and conclusions, which will propose responses to the key findings to inform Sport Ireland's investment in and support of the Community Coaching Programme going forward.

To note, the data presented stems from a range of datasets, both existing and generated through the recent consultation for the evaluation. The sources of information are indicated in either the text preceding the graphs/tables and charts or are labelled on the graphs. The graphs have also been colour coded to differentiate the data source. They are as follows:

Blue: 3 Month Post Course Completion Survey

Green: Participant Registration Questionnaire

Red: Crowe LSP Survey

Purple: Sport Ireland LSP Feedback Survey

Orange: End of Programme Participant Questionnaire

The graphs are labelled with the percentages and the associated number of responses ('n'), e.g. x% (x). Within the text, where percentages are set out, they are followed by the associated number of responses in the form 'n=x'.

### 5.2 Outcomes Evaluation

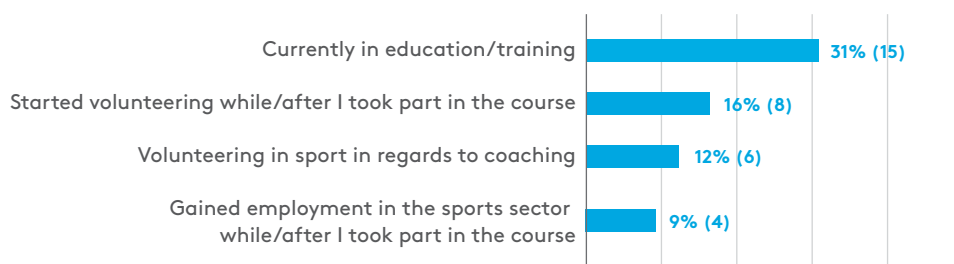
Throughout the consultation process the outcomes set by Sport Ireland were discussed in detail. 'Additional outcomes', i.e. any other outcomes believed to be either a direct or indirect result of the programme e.g. participants gaining confidence, improvement in participant mental health etc., were also mentioned and are also noted.

#### 5.2.1 Overall Capacity Increase

Three months following course completion, participants were asked whether they had achieved one or more of the four prescribed outcomes. The individual increases across the four outcomes are outlined in the below graph.

#### Current Situation - Capacity Increase

##### 3 Month Post Course Completion - Multiple Choice for 49 Participants



However, in addition to the figures outlined in the graph, it is possible to calculate that overall **51% of individuals who responded to the 3-month post course completion survey**, achieved one or more of the four outcomes.

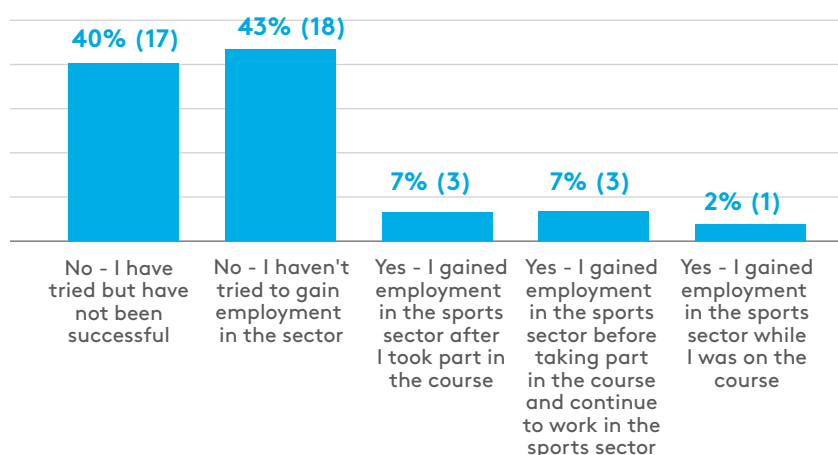
The 51% is calculated by counting individuals who achieved an outcome, regardless whether or not they achieved more than one i.e. if somebody went on to volunteer and went on to further education they would be counted as one individual. Because of this, the calculation avoids double counting outcomes and instead counts individuals who achieved at least one of the four prescribed outcomes.

### Outcome: Employment

The following three graphs highlight the participant employment situation three months' post completion. Prior to the programme, participants were asked in the Participant Questionnaire (297 responses in total) what they hoped to achieve by completing the programme and 52% (n=152) answered 'learning how to find employment opportunities in the sports sector'. When asked three months following the programme (49 participant responses), 9% (n=4) of past participants indicated that they gained employment in the sports sector either during or following the course and 7% (n=3) indicated that they had already been in employment before commencing the course and therefore continued to work in the sport sector.

### Since finishing the community coaching programme, are you working in the sports sector?

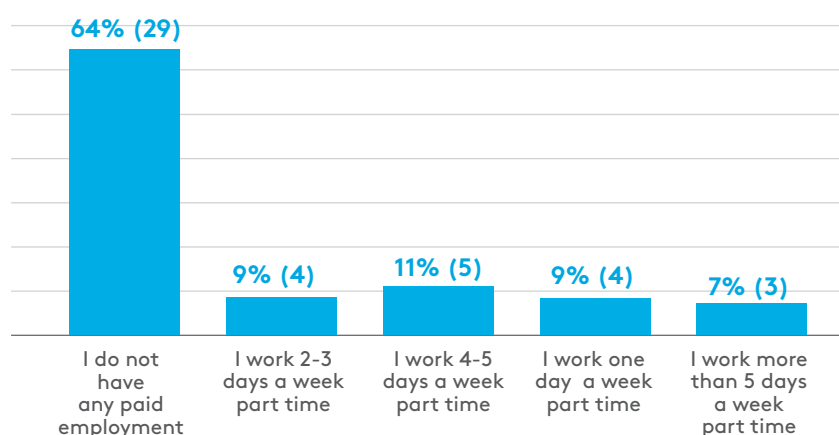
3 Month Post Course Completion Survey - 42 Responses



Participants were also asked what best described their employment situation. However, in contrast to the previous graph, the answers indicate participant employment in general and not specifically within the sport sector.

### Which best describes your employment situation?

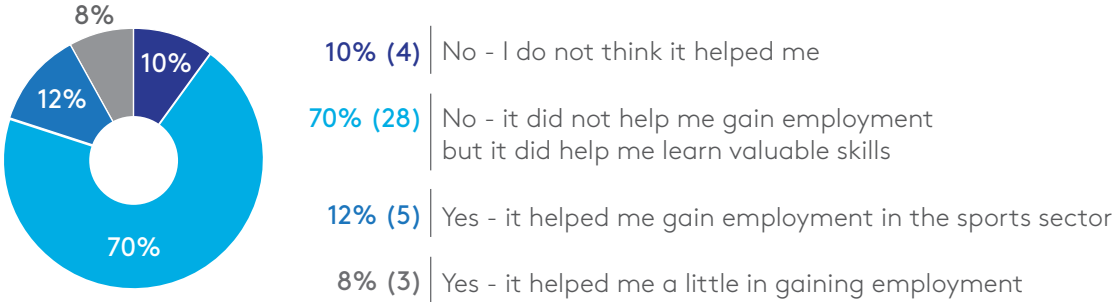
3 Month Post Course Completion Survey - 45 Responses





The graph below highlights that, three months following their participation in the programme, 70% (n=28) of participants believed the programme 'did not help me gain employment but it did help me learn valuable skills'. In contrast, 20% (n=8) believed the programme either 'helped them/helped them a little in gaining employment' in the sports sector.

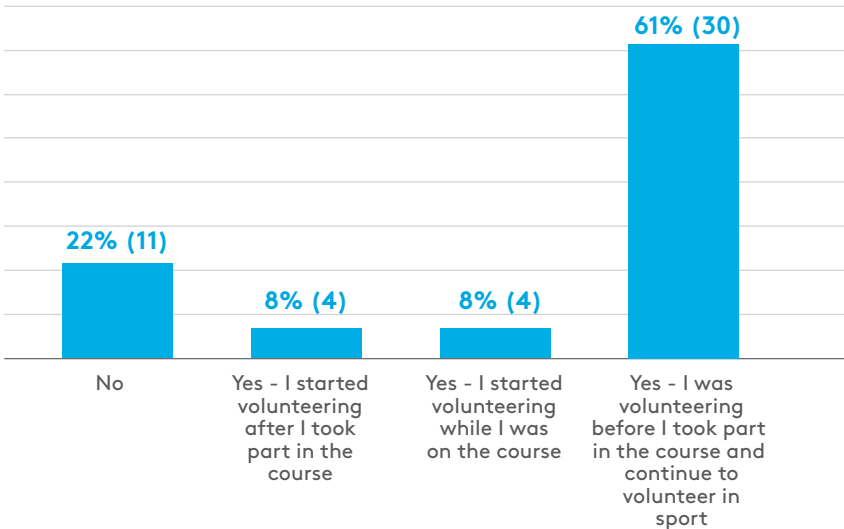
**Do you think taking part in the community coaching programme has helped you gain employment in the sports sector?**  
*3 Month Post Course Completion Survey - 40 Responses*



**Volunteering / Coaching**

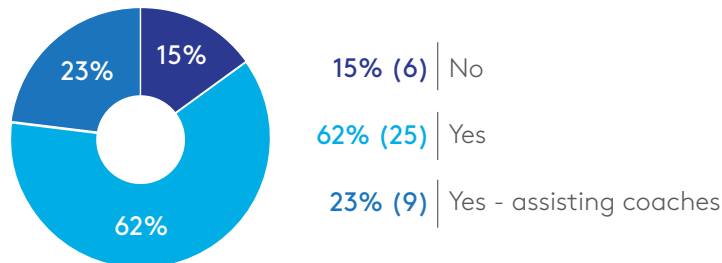
The two graphs below depict participant responses three months following the completion of the programme in relation to volunteering and coaching in sport. Although 61% (n=30) indicated that they were volunteering in sport, this cannot be directly attributed to the course as they were volunteering previously, which indicates a motivation to further develop coaching skills and apply them in a pre-existing coaching context. However, 18% (n=8) of participants either started volunteering during or after taking part in the course.

**On finishing the Community Coaching Programme, have you volunteered in sport?**  
*3 Month Post Course Completion Survey - 49 Responses*



As depicted below, 62% (n=25) of participants who indicated they were volunteering, were involved in coaching and a further 23% (n=9) were assisting coaches.

***If you are volunteering in sport, are you coaching?***  
*3 Month Post Course Completion Survey - 40 Responses*

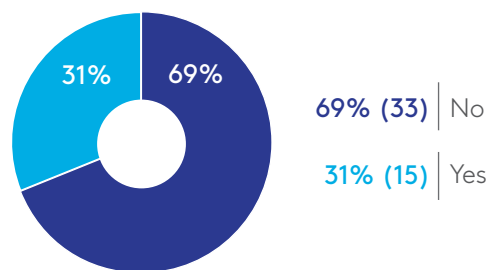


**Further Education/Training**

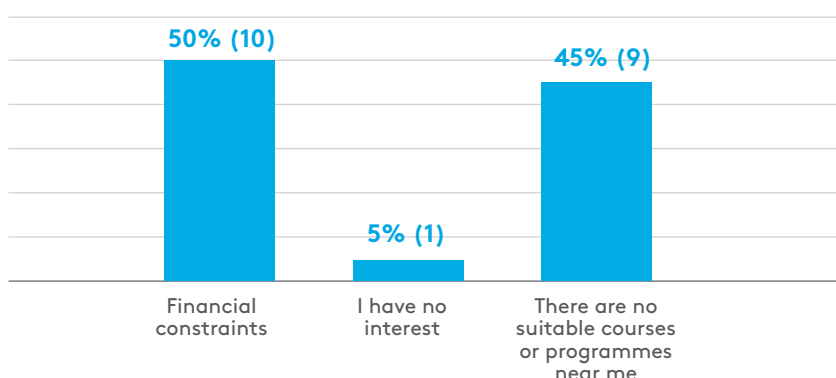
Participants were asked three months' post completion whether they were in education and training. As depicted below, 31% (n=15) answered that they were. For the 69% (n=33) who answered that they were not involved, the barriers for doing so were:

- Financial constraints at 50% (n=10)
- There are 'no suitable courses or programmes near me' at 45% (n=9)
- 5% indicated that they 'had no interest' in further education and training (n=1)

***Are you currently in education/ training?***  
*3 Month Post Course Completion Survey - 48 Responses*



***If you are not currently in education, what barriers prevent you from this?***  
*3 Month Post Course Completion Survey - 20 Responses*

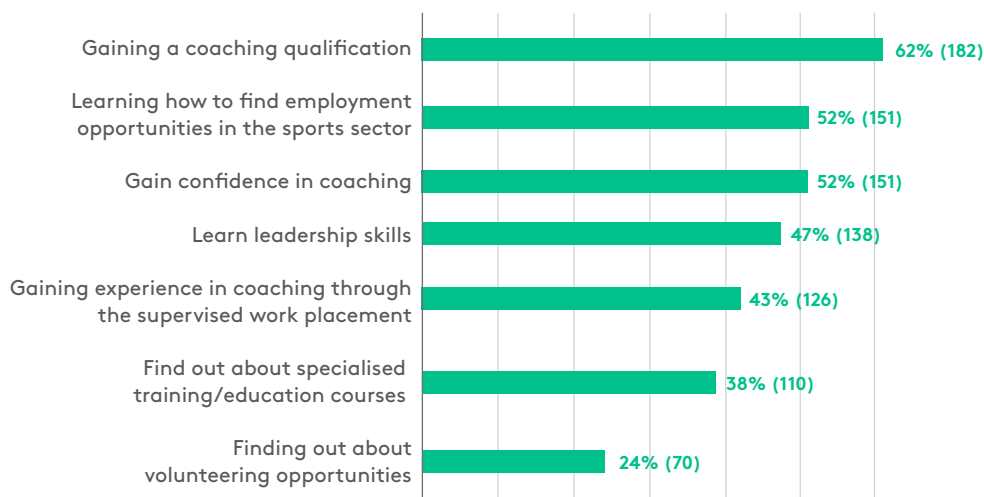


## Participant motivation

Participants were asked what they hoped to achieve by completing the programme. Highlighted in the graph below, the most frequently answered, at 62% (n=182), was 'gaining a coaching qualification', followed by 'gaining confidence in coaching' at 52% (n=151) and 'learning how to find employment opportunities in the sports sector' at 52% (n=151).

## What do you hope to achieve by completing the Community Coaching programme?

### Participant Registration Questionnaire - 293 Responses



Following this, participants were also asked which area of the programme they thought would be most beneficial to them. Similar to the graph above, participants anticipated that 'Gaining a Coaching Qualification in Sport' at 35% (n=102) would be the most beneficial to them, followed by 'personal development' at 30% (n=89).

## Outcome influences

A number of influencing factors were outlined as having impacted on whether the programme was successful in achieving the four prescribed outcomes, including:

### • The participant:

- Motivations and choice versus obligation to take part via an employment scheme
- Profile/personal characteristics, capacity for personal development and 'ability to see opportunities'
- The 'stage' the participant was at in terms of employment and education when starting the programme i.e. current employment situation, previous work experience and prior education levels or qualifications. As answered in the Participant Registration Questionnaire:
  - 80% (n=237) of participants did not have any paid employment, therefore 20% had some form between 1 to 5 days per week.
  - 57% (n=169) of participants had not received any previous education or training around coaching in sport.
  - 57% (n=167) of participant's highest level of education was either Primary School, Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate.
  - 43% (n=128) had completed third level/post-secondary level education

*"It's about the individual and whether they see the opportunities"*

- Previous experience either volunteering or working in the sports sector, or both, before the programme at 66% (n=197) which was highlighted in the Participant Registration Questionnaire.
- In 2017, a number of LSPs widened their target group in order to attract a broader audience e.g. stay at home parents and those who were not necessarily looking for employment or further educational opportunities, but rather a skills development opportunity.

*“We had to evolve to capture a wider audience”*

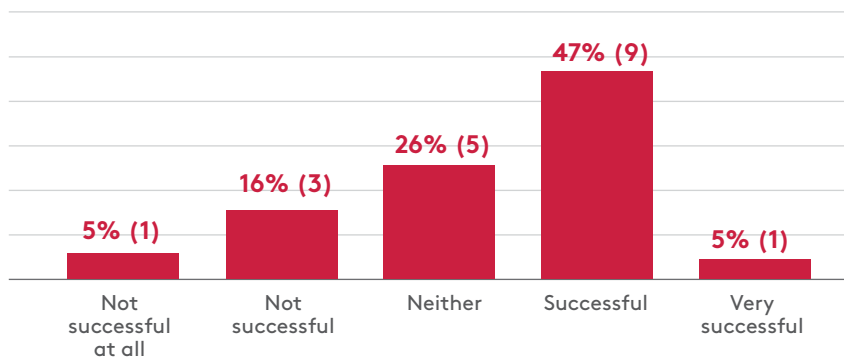
- The **course coordinator’s capacity to provide extra assistance** or ‘hand holding’ to the participant during the course. The coordinator was often discussed as a ‘guide’ to help participants ‘reach the end goal’.
- **Limitations in regards to employment opportunities** in the sports sector was highlighted by a number of LSPs who mentioned that even individuals with third level qualifications in sport were struggling to secure employment.

### Perceived achievement of outcomes

The following four graphs depict the LSPs response (from the Crowe LSP survey) in regards to their perception of whether or not the programme achieved its aims in aiding participants to gain employment, become coaches, become volunteers or go on to pursue higher education opportunities. Overall the LSPs were positive in terms of participants becoming a coach/volunteer, however there were more mixed response regarding whether participants gained employment or went on to further education.

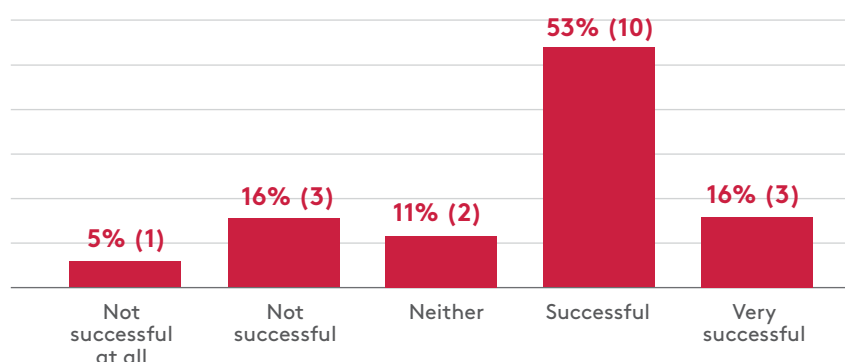
#### *To what extent do you think the programme achieved its aim to gain participants employment?*

*Crowe LSP Survey - 19 Responses*



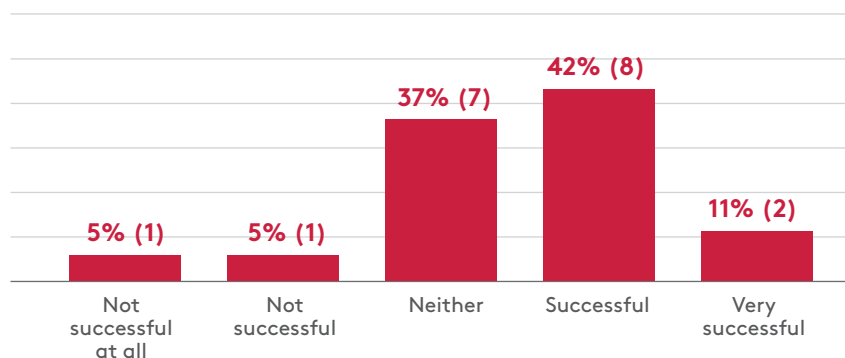
#### *To what extent do you believe the programme achieved its intended outcomes of assisting participants to become coaches?*

*Crowe LSP Survey - 19 Responses*



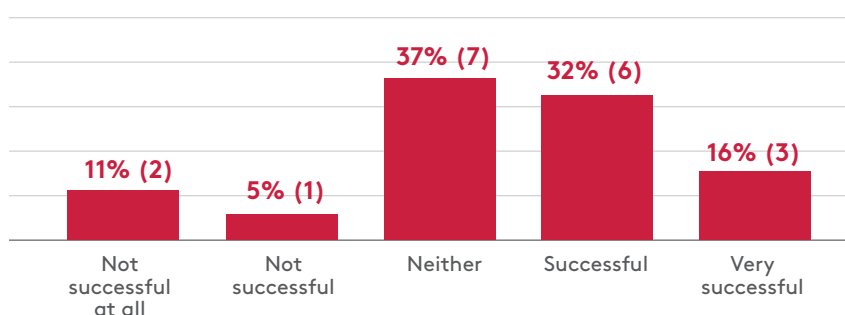
*To what extent do you believe the programme achieved its intended outcomes of assisting participants to become volunteers?*

*Crowe LSP Survey - 19 Responses*



*To what extent do you believe the programme achieved its intended outcomes of assisting participants to pursue higher education opportunities?*

*Crowe LSP Survey - 19 Responses*



### 5.2.2 Additional Outcomes

During the consultation process, it was generally felt that the outcomes set by Sport Ireland captured a limited set of outcomes and did not capture all of the benefits of the programme. A number of additional outcomes for participants and also for LSPs, NGBs, partners, host organisations and the wider community were highlighted. These included:

- The **overall positive 'social impact' of the course** i.e. community involvement/engagement and leadership.
- Assisting participants to **achieve 'intangible' benefits**, such as gaining confidence, improved self-esteem etc.
- Providing participants with a number of **health and mental health benefits** including improvements in physical health e.g. fitness levels.
- Improvements to **participant's personal development skillsets** such as CV writing, interview skills, leadership skills etc.
- A number of the NGBs, partners and hosts noted that the programme enabled them to fulfil their **own organisation's objectives and ambitions**. This often related to shared values around community development/engagement and improvements in physical and mental health within the community.
- It was often mentioned that course participants became **tutors for further programmes and similar LSP courses**. This was discussed as a positive for the LSPs in terms of staff resourcing, participant employment and providing a platform for the individual to continue developing and learning.

*"The social impact of the course is key, as well as participant's personal development"*

*"These programmes offer us the opportunity to upskill new coaches that will assist with the promotion of athletics to the community"*

## 5.3 Process Evaluation

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In terms of the process evaluation, the findings from the research and consultation have been categorised into key themes, which are presented in chronological order based on the phases of programme delivery i.e. from programme design to programme monitoring and completion. These phases are visually depicted in Section 6, Process Map.

### 5.3.1 Programme Application & Design

#### LSP application process

Each LSP was required to submit an application form which outlined a number of aspects related to the intended delivery of the programme. Following a brief review of the application forms from 2016 and 2017, it is evident that although each application was detailed, the level of detail that was provided for each section varied. For example, some LSPs outlined their approach to marketing and communications with details such as specific activities, timings and costings, whereas other LSPs provided a summary list of promotional methods/channels they would use e.g. 'social media', 'advertising'.

The application forms included the following sections:

- Project timelines
- Course structure
- Description how the LSP will meet the objectives
- Partners involved
- The initiatives and education and training modules that will be rolled out
- Approach to recruitment and the selection process
- Expected outcomes for participants as well as the wider community
- Proposed number of participants
- Approach to marketing and communications
- Evaluation process
- Resources



### Joint Application

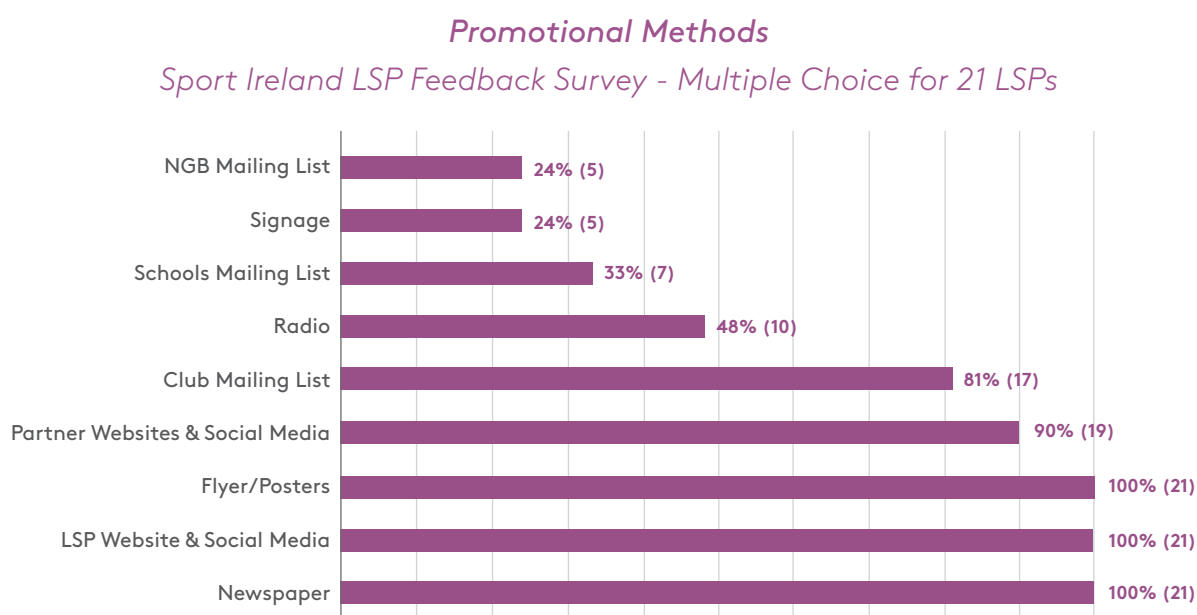
In addition to the above, 22% (n=4) indicated that they submitted a joint application with another LSP. Working with neighbouring counties was cited as enabling further reach and greater access to resources.

### Establishment of a multi-agency committee

65% (n=11) indicated that a multi-agency committee was established, with representation from Local Authorities, NGBs, clubs and 'other' bodies such as Education and Training Boards, Government Departments such as the Department of Social Protection and education institutions.

### 5.3.2 Programme Promotion & Advertising

The graph below highlights the LSPs favoured promotional methods. 100% (n=19) outlined their promotions including 'via the LSP website and social media accounts', 'newspapers' and 'flyers/posters'.



### Participant awareness

A generally held view in the consultation was that awareness was generated at a local level but awareness levels would have benefited from national branding and uniform templates i.e. National brand toolkits, signage etc. However, that said, as indicated in the Crowe LSP survey:

- 95% (n=18) believed that programme was promoted as intended.
- 61% (n=11) believed the programme generated sufficient awareness.

### Partner awareness

Although local employment agencies and partner organisations were highlighted in the survey findings as one of the main methods used to recruit programme participants, some challenges were noted. Views were expressed that there was a perceived lack of awareness amongst some local partner organisations e.g. ETBs and a 'disconnect' with local employment agencies which reduced 'buy in', promotion and referrals.

*"We need to improve promoting the benefits of participation to potential participants"*

*"The local employment agencies were not aware of the course, which impacted the level of support"*



### 5.3.3 Recruitment

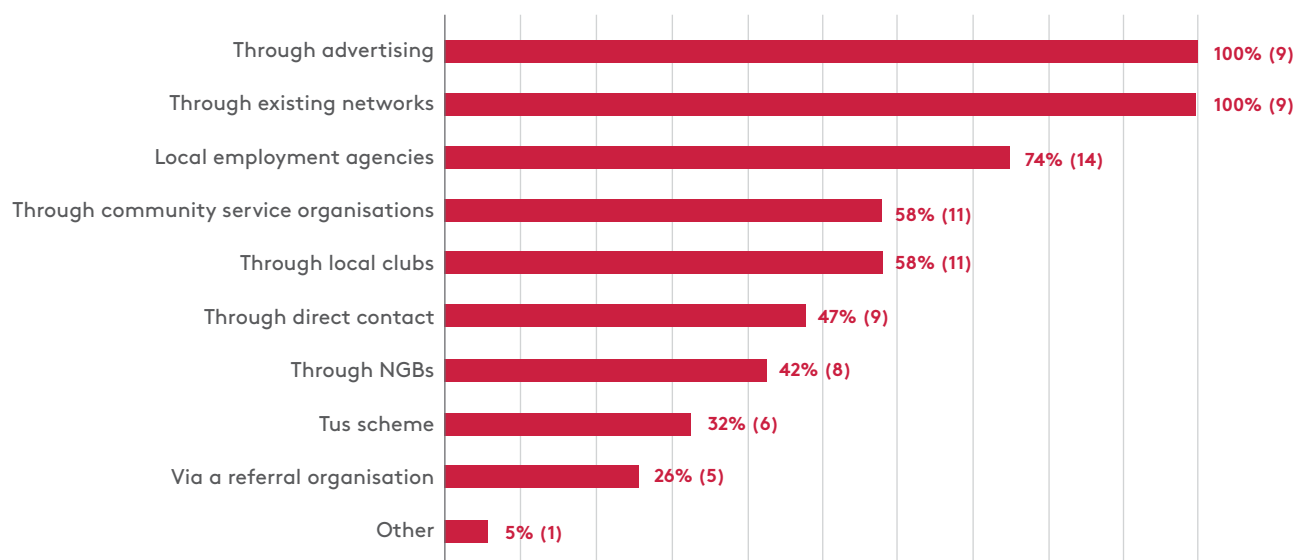
Overall, it was felt that most LSPs could recruit sufficient numbers for their programmes. As highlighted in the Sport Ireland LSP Survey in terms of the selection process, 19% (n=4) 'accepted everybody that applied', in contrast to interviewing interested participants at 81% (n=17).

The following points were also raised related to recruitment constraints:

- It was mentioned that having a programme that provided participants with a certified qualification on completion e.g. QQI or partnership with an education institution would have provided a greater draw in recruiting potential candidates.
- It was commented upon that applicants didn't always convert to participants. Suggestions as to why this was the case included potentially being discouraged due to the time consuming process and also that there may have been an expectation of payment/an allowance for participation.

In terms of recruitment methods, as highlighted in the graph below, the most frequently used recruitment methods were 'through advertising' 100% (n=9), 'through existing networks' 100% (n=9) and via local employment agencies 74% (n=14).

#### *How were jobseekers recruited onto the programme? Crowe LSP Survey - Multiple Choice for 19 LSPs*



### 5.3.4 Programme Delivery & Roles

Overall, the consultation process revealed that most aspects of the programme were delivered as intended. This is depicted in the following graph.

The 78% (n=14) for 'work placement' was explored in greater detail during the consultation process. It was felt that sourcing suitable work placements could be challenging and required the LSP to have existing connections with suitable clubs, organisations, host organisations etc. and this was not always the case.

*Were the following aspects of the programme delivered as intended?  
Crowe LSP Survey - Multiple Choice for 19 LSPs*



### 5.3.5 Role of the Course Coordinator

As answered in the Crowe LSP Survey, in terms of how the role of course coordinator was delivered, 50% (n=9) noted that it was part of a 'dedicated resource from inside the LSP' and 44% (n=8) noted it was a 'dedicated resource from outside the LSP'.

The role of the course coordinator was seen to be key in successful programme delivery. There was an overarching belief that the course coordinator added real value to the programme and was influential in ensuring participant engagement and programme completion. Key success factors included:

- Accessibility of the course coordinator and input provided when, and if, necessary.
- The skills of course coordinator and their ability to form meaningful connections with the participants i.e. strong communication and people skills.
- High levels of knowledge regarding all aspects of the course and 'how it interconnects'.
- Where the coordinator was from, knowledge of additional supports, courses etc. was considered beneficial.

It was also mentioned that course coordinators sometimes had to deal with disclosures which could be 'awkward' and required the skills and expertise to deal with sensitive issues if and when they arose.



### 5.3.6 Delivery of Modules

It was indicated that 61% of the course coordinators delivered modules on the programme. In terms of module delivery, the highest numbers delivered physical activity training at 42% (n=8), sports coach training at 32% (n=6) and job placement experience at 26% (n=5).

The advantages of course coordinators delivering modules, as cited in consultation, included:

- The existing relationship between the coordinator and participants providing a greater connection and trust.
- Keeping the coordinator connected and 'on the ground'.

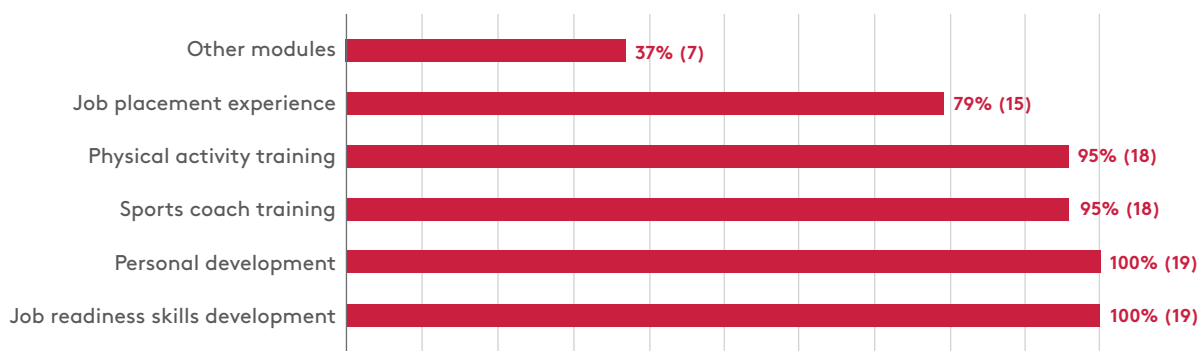
In addition to the course coordinator delivering modules, 94% (n=17) of LSPs used tutors to deliver modules. Often these tutors were recruited through the LSPs existing database of tutors, NGB tutors and partner organisations.

#### Module exposure

'Module exposure' refers to the modules provided by the LSPs to participants i.e. how many participants were 'exposed' to the certain modules. Of those surveyed, all LSPs appear to have delivered job readiness skills development and personal development 100% (n=19), followed by sports coach training and physical activity training at 95% (n=18). As previously highlighted and depicted in the graph below, 'job placement experience' was a challenge to deliver, with 79% (n=15) exposed to it.

The 'other' modules delivered at 37%, (n=7) were described as advanced or specialised programmes provided in particular circumstances, where possible, to respond to participant successes, motivations and requests.

#### *What modules were participants exposed to? Crowe LSP Survey - Multiple Choice for 19 LSPs*



### 5.3.7 Communication

All data in this section, and in section 5.3.8 Engagement, comes from the Crowe LSP survey and individual interviews as question were not asked regarding communications and engagement in the original datasets.

Communication is analysed between three different groupings of stakeholders:

- Between LSPs and NGBs, Partners and Host Organisations
- Between LSPs and Participants
- From NGBs, Partners, and Host Organisations to Participants

### **Between LSPs and NGBs, Partners and Host Organisations**

- Communication processes between the LSPs and their partner organisations were described positively, 'The LSP were constantly in touch'.
- Methods used were believed to be effective, leading to 'good work relationship' with 'very effective communications'.
- The main communication methods used included meetings, emails and calls.
- Formal structures including multi-agency committee meetings, Boards and Steering groups were used.
- Generally, the NGBs, partners and hosts had 'an assigned point of contact', liaising directly with the coordinator and providing updates back to their internal structures.
- Involvement with LSPs appears to have been more frequent at the set-up stages via involvement in promotion, interviews, selection and attendance at induction days. Subsequently updates tended to focus on progress and ensuring all was proceeding as planned.
- It was often mentioned that relationships had been established before the programme and this was useful in working with people already known to the NGBs, partners and hosts.

### **Between LSPs and Participants**

Overall, there was a high level of communication between the LSPs and the participants, with 95% (n=18) of LSPs describing the communication process as effective and led by the course coordinator who would provide the 'link' (Crowe LSP Survey).

### **From NGBs, Partners, and Host Organisations to Participants**

- NGBs described communication with participants as being mainly at the interview stage of the programme and subsequently channelled through tutors.
- Communications between tutors and participants was sometimes described as 'challenging' given the profile of participants.
- There was some mention of partner organisations offering supports after the programme and also of continuing to monitor participant progression after programme completion.
- Hosts mentioned informally meeting participants 'at lunch' and over the time they were on the programme

## **5.3.8 Engagement**

Similarly, engagement is analysed between three different groupings of stakeholders:

- Between LSPs and NGBs, Partners and Host Organisations
- Between LSPs/Course Coordinators and Participants
- Between NGBs, Partners and Host Organisations and Participants

### **Between LSPs and NGBs, Partners and Host Organisations**

- Engagement was cited as revolving around:
  - Exchange of opinions, ideas and potential opportunities with the LSP.
  - Exchange of information initially, including where NGBs, partners and host Organisations had an 'initial sell'.
  - Dissemination and use of templates and programme structures.
  - In general, levels of engagement were felt to be 'productive', 'open', 'excellent' and 'a mutual process'. Some described engagement as improving over time and being 'less disjointed' once the first recruitment phase and the first year was completed. One person described needing more information on the participants.
  - It was suggested that more national involvement initially would have been useful, when national organisations 'are around the table, it would be an easier sell'.
- Prior relationships with the LSPs were often described, 'we work with several LSPs in various areas every day of the week for various reasons' so links often existed due to other interactions.
- Coordinators were often singled out as being helpful and accessible and a key engagement conduit.

### Between LSPs/Course Coordinators and Participants

The level and quality of engagement of participants was always described as being linked to the individual, by way of:

- Their level of motivation
- Their reason for being on the programme, and,
- Whether or not they had actively chosen to be on the programme

### Between NGBs, Partners and Host Organisations and Participants

- Again, the engagement with participants was described as being linked to the individual and ranged from 'challenging' to 'excellent participation in the room, reflecting willing participants', 'people felt part of something'.
- Levels of engagement varied depending on what went through the coordinator or tutor and what needed to happen directly. The range described went from 'basic enough, specific touchpoints, only a few limited days of exposure' to 'we met them most weeks and at the interview and closing ceremony'.
- Given the variance, effectiveness of engagement between NGBs, partners, hosts and participants was most often described as 'mixed'.

### 5.3.9 Participant Course Engagement

Overall, as answered in the Crowe LSP survey, the LSPs considered participant engagement with the programme to be 'adequate' at 42% (n=8) to 'high level' at 53% (n=10).

In terms of the specific modules, engagement was seen to vary from 'person to person' as some participants lacked interest in all modules, instead 'cherry picking' which modules to engage with most.

- Perceived engagement with 'physical activity training' and 'sports coach training' were described positively:
  - 63% (n=12) described as 'high' level of engagement and 37% (n=7) 'adequate' with physical activity training.
  - 74% (n=14) described as 'high level of engagement and 16% (n=3) 'adequate' with sports coach training.
- In contrast, engagement with 'job placement' was more varied, with 21% (n=4) described as having 'low levels of engagement' and 47% (n=9) 'adequate levels of engagement'.

*"The sports side of the programme tends to be more comfortable for participants"*

### 5.3.10 Attendance Rates and Dropouts

As indicated in Crowe's LSP survey, 100% (n=19) of LSPs recorded attendance for each of the modules. Estimation of attendance is highlighted in the table below. The percentages are reflective of the modules provided by the LSPs. As highlighted below, overall attendance for each module was high. However, there are inconsistencies across the different modules and as previously mentioned, sports coach training generally secured the highest level of attendance.

*"Attendance figures could be difficult to sustain"*

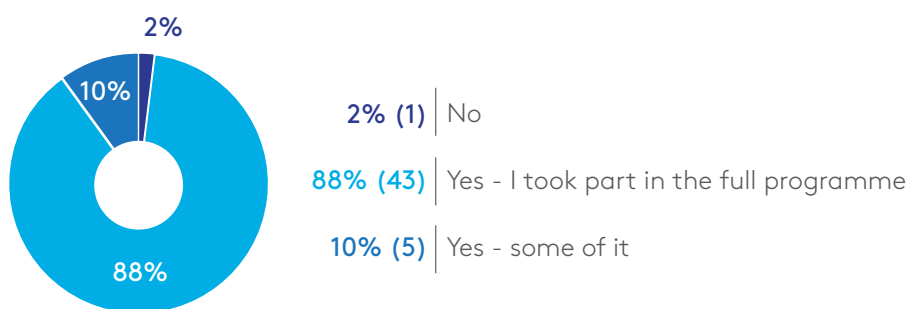
The average estimation of attendance i.e. 'the mean', is all the estimations added and divided by the amount of responses. The max estimation of attendance i.e. the highest estimation provided by a respondent, is also presented in the following table.

Module	Average	Max
Job Readiness	80%	100%
Personal Development	82.50%	100%
Sports Coach Training	90%	100%
Physical Activity Training	85%	100%
Placement Experience	85%	100%
Other Module	85%	100%

### 5.3.11 Completion Rates

The chart below presents the responses of participants who were surveyed three months' post programme completion.

*Did you complete the full community coaching programme?  
3 month Post Completion Participant Survey - 49 Responses*



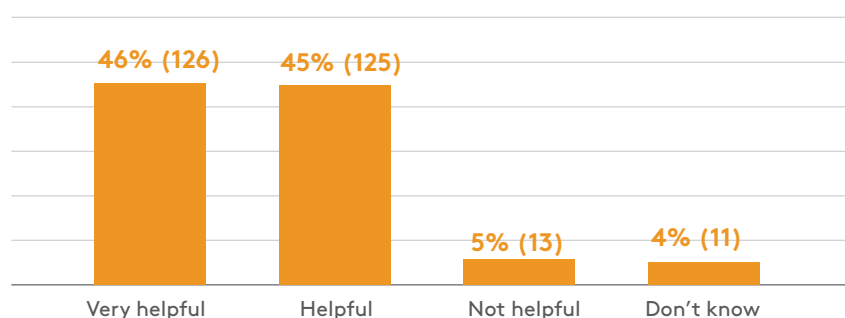
During the consultation process, the reasons suggested for participants not completing the programme included:

- Personal issues such as their ability to source childcare, access to transportation, mental health issues etc.
- Lack of personal motivation to engage with the course.

### 5.3.12 Relevance

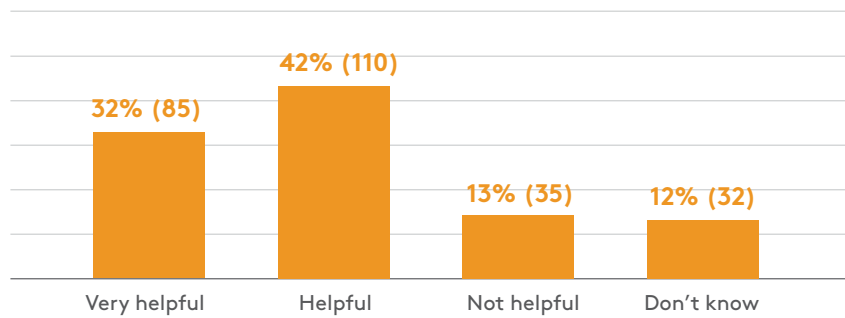
In the participant end of programme questionnaire, participants were asked to rate the level of 'helpfulness' of various aspects of the programme. The breakdowns are depicted in the following graphs and show, in general, high levels of positive feedback.

*Job Readiness Skills  
End of Programme Participant Questionnaire - 275 Responses*



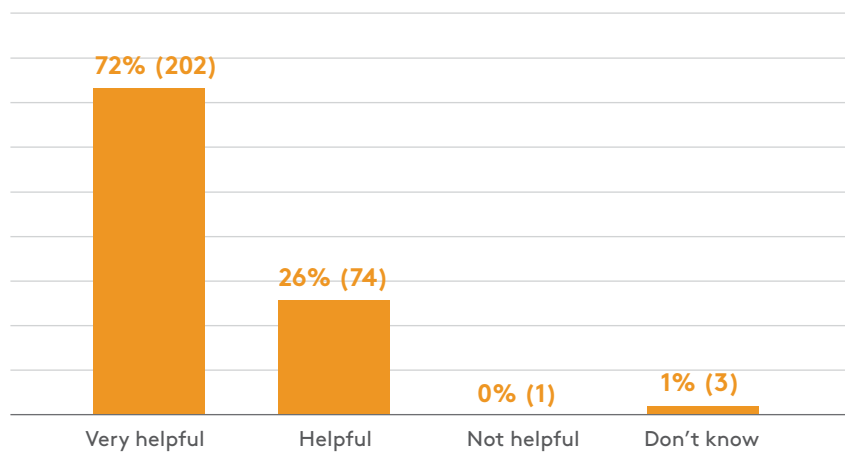
### Job Placement Skills

End of Programme Participant Questionnaire - 262 Responses



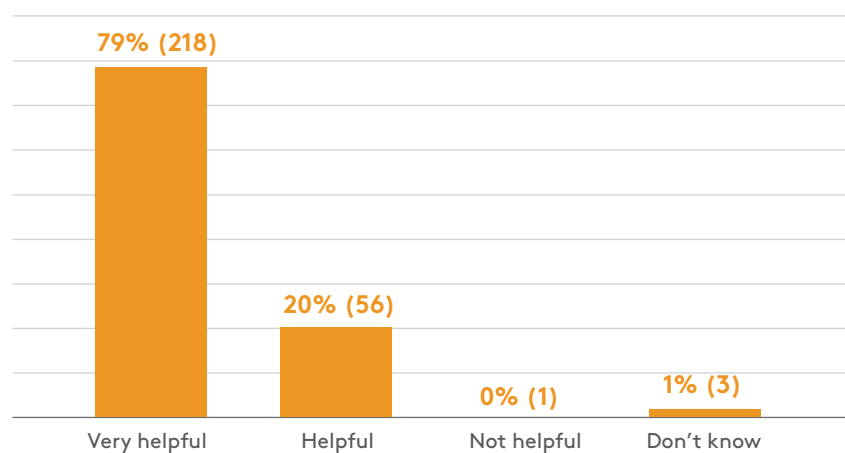
### Sports Coaching Training

End of Programme Participant Questionnaire - 280 Responses



### Physical Activity Training

End of Programme Participant Questionnaire - 277 Responses

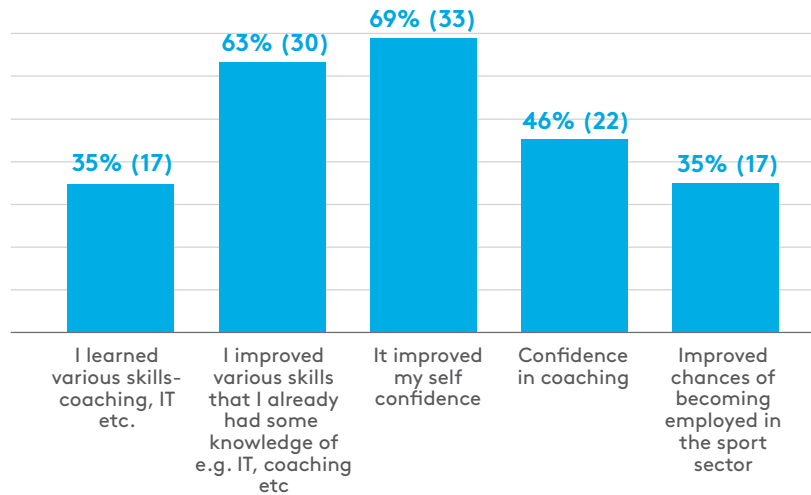




Three months' post course completion participants were also asked what areas they found useful by taking part in the community coaching programme. Answers are depicted below.

### How did taking part in the community coaching programme help you?

3 Month Post Course Completion - Multiple Choice for 49 Participants

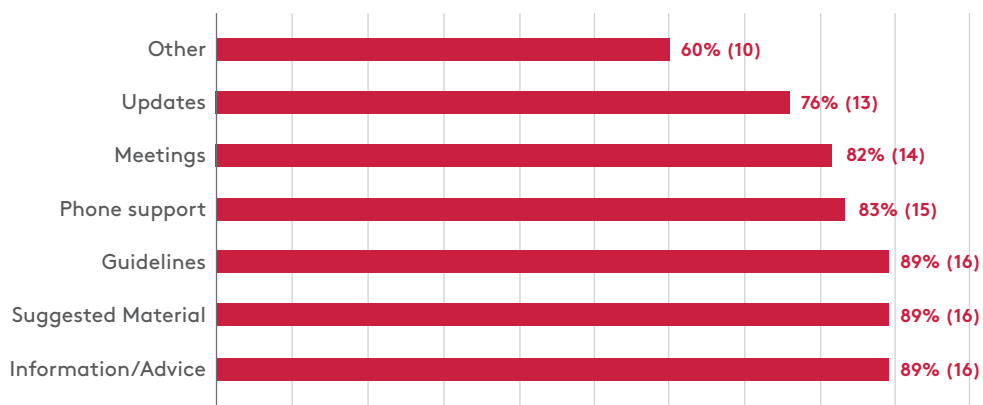


#### 5.3.13 Supports Provided

Overall, it was felt that sufficient support was provided by Sport Ireland to the LSPs, in particular in relation to information/advice, suggested model and guidelines.

### Did Sport Ireland provide sufficient supports in the following areas?

Crowe LSP Survey - Multiple Choice for 19 LSPs



It was highlighted that further support would be welcomed in the following areas:

- Promotional support tools i.e. branding templates, signage
- Provision of guest speakers
- National level partnerships e.g. with ETBs, DSP etc.

*“Support in terms of promotional methods and creating awareness would be valued”*

*“It needs to have a national ownership that creates a uniformity and national awareness”*

### 5.3.14 Monitoring/Measurement Systems

As outlined in the Crowe LSP survey, 58% (n=11) of LSPs set KPIs for the programme.

- Generally speaking, those who set KPIs did it at the programme planning stage, and often drafted KPIs in conjunction with the course coordinator and NGB/partner organisation.
- It was commented that LSPs often changed and updated their KPIs during programme delivery, depending on the participant group, to reflect their changing needs.
- 100% (n=19) of LSPs monitored the programme as it was delivered. The following methods were provided as examples by the LSPs on monitoring the programme:
  - Tracking attendance
  - Tracking work experience completion rates
  - Gathering participant feedback either verbally at meetings or via texts, emails and circulation of pre and post programme evaluation questionnaires
  - Gathering partner feedback via meetings
  - Requesting coordinator feedback at steering committee meetings
  - Conducting an end of project focus group
  - Module evaluation forms
  - Testimonials from participants

## 5.4 Further considerations

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Throughout the consultation process, a number of observations were made which do not specifically relate to the programme's outcomes or processes but provide valuable insights. These include comments on external influencing factors and willingness to participate in the programme again in the future.

### 5.4.1 External Influencing Factors

A number of external influencing factors were discussed during the consultation process of the evaluation. These external factors influenced:

- Programme delivery
- Completion rates

#### Programme delivery

The reasons discussed, which influenced programme delivery, included:

- Sourcing the right venue and location for ease of access for participants.
- Availability of resources such as leisure centres, pitches etc.
- Economic climate and job market.

#### Completion rates

The reasons discussed, which influenced completion rates, included:

- When participants were asked 3 months following the programme for reasons for not completing the programme, 9% (n=4) answered that they 'gained employment'.
- In terms of the LSP's perception of why participants may not have completed the programme, the following were listed:
  - Lack of accredited certifications from third level educational institutions/bodies
  - No transportation to the different modules
  - Found employment
  - Went on to further education
  - Family/personal issues

## 5.4.2 Willingness to participate again/recommend

### LSPs willingness to participate again

Only 9% (n=2) of LSPs commented that they would be 'unsure' about participating again in the LSP feedback questionnaire. Some noted that future participation would be contingent on or improved by factors including:

- Sourcing the correct coordinator who is a good fit, with the required skillset.
- Broadening out the target group to include more than just the long term unemployed or jobseekers.
- Introducing new KPIs for the programme or allowing LSPs to set some of their own.
- Provision of sufficient funding.
- Provision of sufficient support mechanisms for participants.
- Greater coordination with partner organisations at a national level.
- Access to national branding guidelines, templates, marketing collateral etc.

### Partners willingness to participate again

Similarly, the NGBs, partners and hosts consulted responded positively when asked whether they would be willing to participate again. Some qualified their willingness on the basis of:

- Provision of sufficient funding.
- Increase in work experience opportunities.
- Extending the length of certain modules.
- Broadening out the target group to include more than just the long term unemployed or jobseekers.
- Monitoring the market to ensure the course matches employment market demands.

*"It would be beneficial to have more time for each module and greater work experience opportunities"*

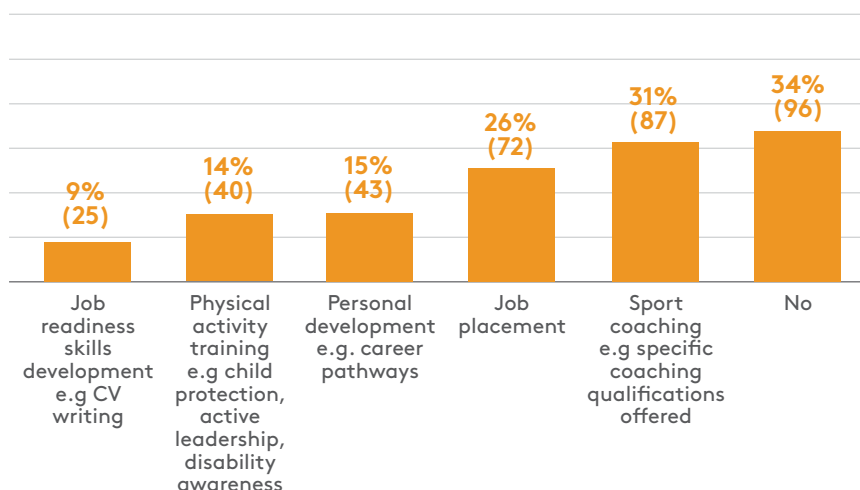
### Participants willingness to recommend

100% (n=49) of participants who were surveyed three months after course completion said that they would recommend the programme to people they knew were interested in coaching.

Upon completing the programme (in the end of programme questionnaire), participants were asked if there were any areas the programme could have spent more time on. While 26%(n=96) answered no, the most frequently provided suggestions were 'Sports Coaching Training' at 24%(n=87) and Job Placement at 20% (n=72). Answers are depicted in the graph below.

*"I have loved this programme and it has taught me that I have a lot more to give as a volunteer"*

**Are there any areas you feel the course could have spent more time on?**  
Participant End of Programme Questionnaire - Multiple Choice for 279 Participants





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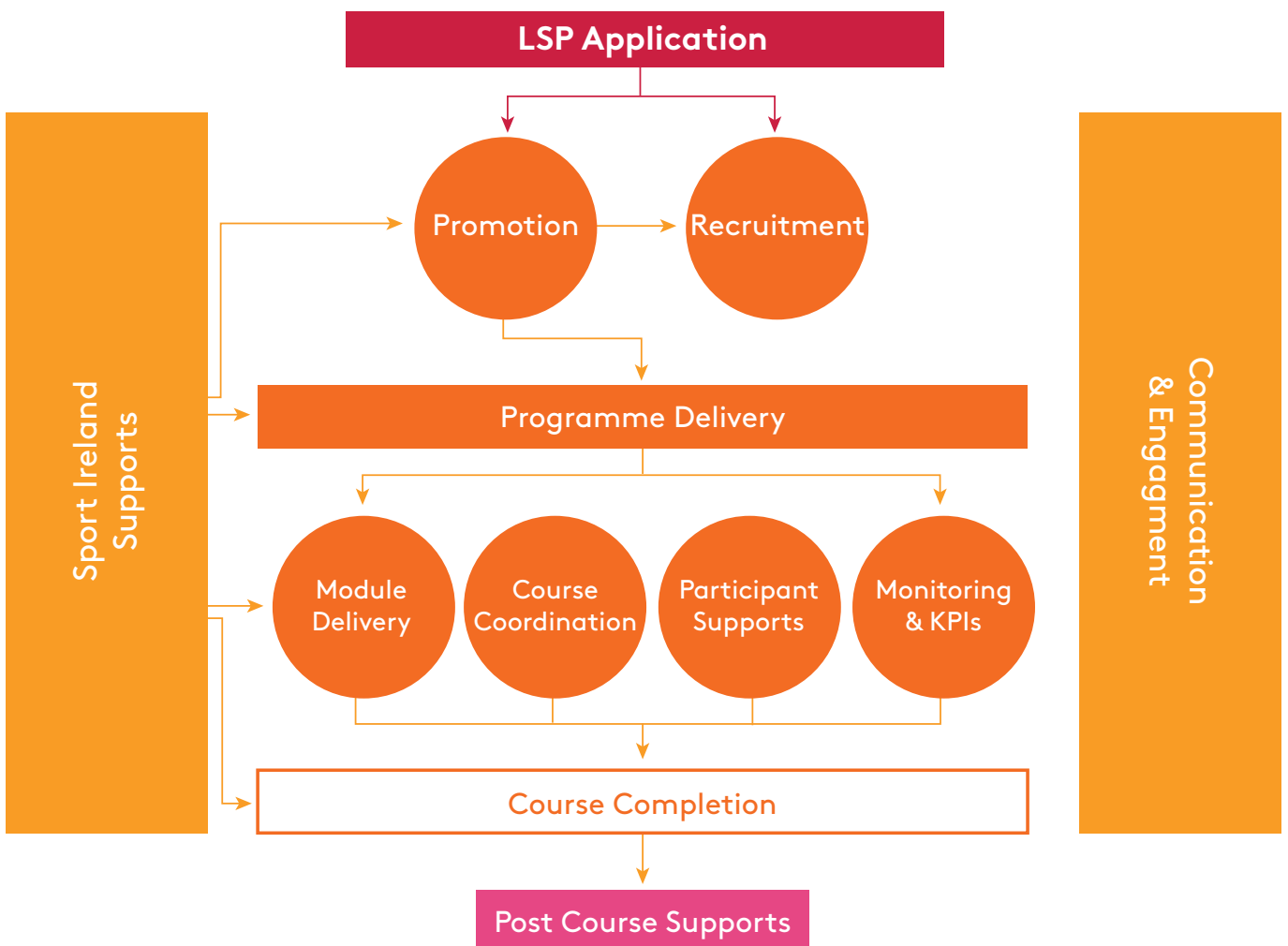
# 6

## Process Map

The visual below depicts the programme processes involved in the evaluation, commencing with the promotion and recruitment of the programme and finishing with course completion. Sport Ireland supports and 'communication and engagement' are depicted on either side, as both of these processes were ongoing for the entire duration of programme delivery.

Although the evaluation did not include reviewing the application process or 'post-course support', these are included in the visual as they were mentioned during the consultation process.

Other elements of the programme such as the design of the programme and consultation between Sport Ireland and the LSPs prior to the programme, are not included as they are not part of the evaluation criteria and were not discussed.





# 7

## Key Learnings

The 'Results and Discussion' section outlined the insights gained in the research and consultation phase of the evaluation. Data gathered is interpreted to determine crucial elements in regards the extent to which the intended outcome of the programme was achieved and it examines how the programme was delivered across the LSPs.

The key learnings in the chapter are derived from the findings and analysis to inform Sport Ireland's investment in and support of the Community Coaching Programme in the future. The learnings are presented firstly in terms of overall outcome learnings, followed by learnings in response to each of the process questions posed in the terms of reference for the process evaluation.

### 7.1 Outcomes Learnings

The key outcome learnings focus on the context and factors influencing programme success in achieving the intended outcomes. The intended outcome of the programme was to assist unemployed people to: gain employment, become a coach, become a volunteer, or go on to higher education in the sports sector. An insight is that 51% of the 49 individuals who responded to the 3-month post course completion survey achieved one or more of the four outcomes. Counting outcomes rather than individuals, of those who provided data on progression within that survey<sup>2</sup>:

- 31% (n=15) indicated they were in further education
- 16% (n=8) that they were volunteering
- 12% (n=6) that they were volunteering as a coach, and,
- 9% (n=4) that they had gained employment.

The achievement of outcomes was influenced by:

- a changed environment in which the programme was being delivered
- a more mixed cohort of programme participants than originally envisaged i.e. fewer jobseekers and unemployed people
- more motivation in relation to coaching as opposed to employment (albeit the two are not mutually exclusive).

<sup>2</sup> As previously stated, it should be noted that these figures include where one individual achieved a number of outcomes



## Employment

Overall, 9% (n=4) of participants in the 3 months' post course completion survey indicated that they had gained employment either after or during the course. 80% (n=237) of participants indicated that they did not have any paid employment prior to the programme and 52% (n=151) cited learning how to find employment opportunities in the sports sector as an aspiration in the pre-programme participant questionnaire (293 participant responses).

## Coaching

Gaining a coaching qualification was not only an aspiration for 62% (n=182) of participants prior to the programme, but it was also believed to be an area of the programme that would be the most beneficial to participants at 35% (n=102). As demonstrated, the sports coaching training and physical activity training was deemed to be very helpful, with the participants indicating after the course that more time could have been spent on it, at 26% (n=72).

## Volunteering

Overall, participants responded positively to volunteering, with 16% (n=8) indicated that they volunteered in sport three months post course completion. In addition to this, when asked in the end of the programme questionnaire (277 responses), participants answered:

- 48% (n=134) 'Yes – I am currently volunteering and intend to keep volunteering'
- 38% (n=105) 'Yes' that they planned on volunteering in sport in the future

## Further education/training

Prior to the programme, 57% (n=169) of participants indicated they had not received previous education or training in sports coaching. Also, prior levels of education varied.

Following on from the course, participants who were not involved in further education noted that the barriers for doing so were financial constraints or no suitable courses near them as opposed to a lack of interest or motivation to engage. In addition, in the End of Programme Questionnaire, 72% (n=197) indicated they felt that had sufficient knowledge for career and education pathways in sport and 78% (n=215) indicated that they were either very confident or confident that they had the skills to find further education/training opportunities.

In the 3 month post course completion survey, 31% (n=15) of participants were engaged in further education, which was the highest response in comparison to the other three outcomes.

### Key Outcomes Learnings

- As demonstrated, participants engaged with the programme for a range of reasons, **including personal and professional motivations**, as well as a number of participants being referred onto the programme. Overall, it appears that participants were driven to achieve an outcome, or even a mix of outcomes e.g. coaching by way of volunteering.
- There is an evident link between **participant motivations and aspirations** and the outcomes set. This increases the relevance/value of the programme for the participant and has a positive impact on the potential of prescribed outcomes being achieved.

## 7.1.1 Economic and policy context

At the time of initial implementation, the four outcomes for the community coaching programme were relevant to the time. Both the sports policy and overall economic and policy context in Ireland has changed since then.

In 2015, unemployment levels were between a highest level of 10.8% and a lowest level of 9.3%. By 2018, unemployment levels had reduced significantly, with the highest levels at 5.9% and the lowest levels at 5.6%.

In 2018, the Government released the National Sports Policy 2018-2027 which sets out a Vision for Irish Sport in 2027 along with 57 actions to transform the sporting landscape over the next decade. In this new policy, one of the three high level goals outlined is 'Improved Capacity' which is described as follows:

*"We will have "fit for purpose" sport bodies (NGBs, LSPs and clubs) with strong leadership, ethics and governance at all levels, professionals and volunteers suitably trained and developed, and modernised working methods and systems. There will be greater levels of cooperation within and across sport, and between sport and other sectors, private and public. Furthermore, within this high level goal one of the Key Performance Indicators is: 'Improved workforce capacity in the sporting sector'. The policy covers building capacity at length and outlines seven key action areas to build capacity at individual, organisational and system levels. The areas relevant to the Community Coaching Programme include volunteering, coaching and workforce development.*

The updated national policy is noteworthy in tracking a changing context and economic culture in Ireland. The objectives set by Sport Ireland for the Community Coaching Programme were relevant to the economic, social and cultural climate in 2015. Defining the programme's outcomes today or in the future should similarly reference the economic and policy environment of the day, which, until 2027, is more centred about 'building capacity' at a time of lower levels of unemployment.

#### Key Learning

- Programme outcomes should be aligned with the economic and sports policies of the day, in order the best reflect the remit of Sport Ireland and partner organisations.
- Likely motivations of programme participants, which will be grounded in the socioeconomic and community climate of the time, should be anticipated and included in success measures being set

#### 7.1.2 Widen the target group

If the programme is to be more appropriate to the economic environment of the day, and acknowledging the diverse range of participant motivations for engaging with the programme, widening the programme's target group would be advised. A number of LSPs had already begun to broaden the programme's target group in 2017 in order to attract expand the potential audience e.g. stay at home parents.

#### Key Learnings

- The target group should be reflective of the economic, social and policy environment of the time and reviewed and updated as each iteration of the programme is being designed.

#### 7.1.3 Additional outcomes

It has been demonstrated that the programme resulted in a wide range of positive benefits not only for participants, but also for the LSPs and partner/host organisations.

#### Key Learnings

**Programme outcomes should formally include** the types of additional **social outcomes** that were recommended during the consultation process such as:

- The 'social impact' of the course i.e. community involvement/engagement and leadership.
- Participant 'intangible' benefits, such as gaining confidence, improved self-esteem etc.
- Participant's health and mental health benefits including improvements in physical health e.g. fitness levels.
- Improvements to participant's personal development skillsets such as CV writing, interview skills, leadership skills etc.
- Increase in capacity within LSPs and partner organisations for those who became tutors etc.
- Partner and host organisations achieving their own organisation's objectives by engaging with the programme e.g. supporting disadvantaged communities, enabling social inclusion etc.



## 7.2 Process Learnings

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Key learnings from the various phases of the programme are presented in response to the questions outlined in the evaluation's terms of reference.

### 7.2.1 Fidelity: Was the programme delivered in a manner as designed and intended? What were the factors that influenced this?

Overall, as indicated in the Crowe LSP survey, the programme was delivered in a manner as designed and intended. Outlined differences in approach to programme delivery can be largely attributed to the LSPs existing structures, geography/geographical spread of the programme's modules, availability of and access to necessary resources and the LSPs relationship with partner organisations/NGBs and hosts. LSPs should remain flexible and adaptive in their approach to allow for unforeseen circumstances and situations which could impact programme delivery.

#### Key Learnings

- National supports provided in relation to both strategic direction and operational supports e.g. templates and guidelines should continue given their outlined contribution to programme fidelity.
- Pre-existing relationships with relevant organisations/hosts were the main source for finding suitable work placements for the participants. To increase work placement opportunities, it could be worthwhile to deepen national relationships with referral organisations which could filter to local commitment and also to share the responsibility of finding suitable work placements with the participants as it would call for greater engagement and a potential increase in available options.

### 7.2.2 Reach: How well were individuals and relevant organisations recruited to the programme?

Overall, it was felt that most LSPs could recruit sufficient numbers for their programmes. Recruiting both individuals and relevant organisations onto the programme relied heavily on existing networks and relationships. In order to increase the reach of the programme to both potential participants and partner organisations, greater awareness building is required directly i.e. advertising and indirectly i.e. via local employment agencies and through Sport Ireland at a national level.

#### Key Learnings

- In addition to this, recruitment supports should be considered as a central support that could be expanded by Sport Ireland. This is not to suggest that the responsibility for recruitment would be removed from the LSPs but rather that local efforts could be reinforced with national awareness being built by Sport Ireland with NGBs, relevant departments, ETBs etc.
- Awareness of the programme should be created at both a national level by Sport Ireland and at a local level by the LSPs, to increase reach to potential partner organisations/NGBs and hosts, as well as prospective participants.
- Promoting the shared values of the programme in terms of social impact and community involvement should be considered by Sport Ireland as a key motivator for the NGBs, partners and hosts who involved themselves in the programme.
- National organisations relationships and connections could be mirrored more at local level to strengthen awareness, referrals and partnerships.
- New sports should be considered to increase the numbers of schools and clubs engaged. Adding greater depth in a specific/niche sport could also increase attracting participants who wish to specialise or build on previous training/experience.

### 7.2.3 Exposure: How many participants were exposed to the course and what were the rates of attendance? What were the factors that influenced this?

Each LSP exposed participants to the programme modules, albeit with some minor exceptions, which were due to individual variables and circumstances i.e. not finding suitable work placement opportunities

Overall attendance for each course was high, however there are inconsistencies across the different modules and as previously mentioned, sports coach training generally secured the highest level of attendance and engagement. Attendance was seen to vary from 'person to person' as some participants lacked interest in all modules, instead 'cherry picking' which ones to engage with. In general, levels of participant attendance were influenced by:

- their level of motivation
- their reason for being on the programme, and,
- whether or not they had actively chosen to be in the programme

#### Key Learnings

- Only certain factors which influence programme exposure and attendance can be controlled, **however individual participant differences / preferences** which can negatively impact course attendance can be mitigated through careful monitoring of attendance and the ability of the LSPs / course coordinators to remain flexible and adaptable in their course offerings.

### 7.2.4 Retention: What percentage of participants completed the programme? What were the factors that influenced this?

In the three months' post course completion survey (49 responses), 88% (n=43) of participants completed the programme. Similarly, in the end of programme questionnaire (275 responses), 79% (n=216) of participants indicated they took part in all aspects of the programme.

The single biggest influencing factor on whether or not participant's completed the programme was individual motivations and needs and the mix of individuals within the group. For example, the groups involved have various learning styles, literacy and IT literacy levels and many are returning to education after a period of time. Because of this individual supports are often required that make a difference to the outcomes achieved and demands on the coordinators and tutors.

#### Key Learnings

- Individual differences lead to the need for LSPs to be responsive and flexible in terms of possible modifications to approach and delivery. This requires a high level of engagement between the course coordinator and participant, and potentially individual supports. Therefore, the role of course coordinator requires careful consideration in terms of job specification, the potential scope of the role and the range of skills required to adequately respond to individual needs. Even in the case of a changing target group, this role is pivotal in the achievement of programme and process success.
- Given the varied nature of motivations and aspirations of participants uncovered in the analysis, consideration should be given to whether all modules should be mandatory or whether some could be optional (to allow for those who have no aspiration to seek employment to focus more on their core area of interest and not attend CV writing modules or interview skills, for example).

### 7.2.5 Satisfaction: Level of perceived relevance and usefulness of the programme by the participants. What were the factors that influenced this?

As defined in the tender, this question is 'different from whether or not the participants 'liked' the programme' and focuses on the 'relevance and usefulness' of the programme.

As demonstrated, participants found the different aspects of the course helpful, particularly in regards to sports coach training and physical activity training. Although the perceived helpfulness did not necessarily always translate to finding employment, becoming a coach, volunteer or going on to further education, the programme did have a positive impact on improved self-confidence 69% (n=33) and improved various skills e.g. IT, coaching 63% (n=30).

## 7.3 Post-programme conclusions

A number of additional learnings stemmed from the research and analysis that could not be categorised as outcomes or process learnings within the phases from programme commencement to programme completion. Instead, the learnings outlined overleaf are considerations post programme completion. What is included provides only the examples that arose in the consultation process – as post programme processes were not included in the scope of this project, the area was not explored in any great detail and may merit future discussion to define further areas and provide more detail.

### Key Learnings

- Providing further course progression could be beneficial for certain selected participants, to move them beyond a foundation course (to Level 1 or Level 2, as has already happened in some areas) and also adding relevant modules or linkages to other aligned courses e.g. nutrition could provide further opportunities
- LSPs should consider providing further post programme supports in terms of job seeking (e.g. free career clinic), placements and set-up advice for those considering setting up a business (e.g. insurance) once participants have completed the programme.



# 8

## Conclusion

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This report seeks to present and evaluate the process and outcomes of the 2016 and 2017 Sport Ireland Community Coaching programmes which were delivered through the Local Sports Partnership (LSP) network. The intended outcome of the programme was to assist unemployed people to:

- gain employment
- become a coach
- become a volunteer, or,
- go on to higher education in the sports sector.

Overall, the evaluation shows that the programme was delivered as intended across the LSPs and nuances in programme delivery can be largely attributed to adaptations based on the LSPs existing structures, geography /geographical spread of the programme's modules, availability of and access to necessary resources and the LSPs relationship with partner organisations/NGBs and hosts. In addition to this, programme delivery was, at times, adapted during implementation, in response to the participant group mix and the varied needs of each cohort.

While the programme's components were tailored to support an individual in achieving one of the four outcomes, the analysis would appear to demonstrate that the perceived usefulness of the programme, for the participants, centred on sports coach and physical activity training, as well as participant personal development. In particular, a significant amount of participants indicated improved confidence levels, which was considered to be of value and relevant.

The feedback gathered during the evaluation was positive amongst the different stakeholders i.e. participants, LSPs, NGBs, partner organisations and hosts. While some minor modifications and adjustments to the programme were suggested, and are noted in this report, each stakeholder revealed encouraging experiences and noted their willingness to engage and/or promote the programme into the future.











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