

Shared power in public services

Case study

The 'Your Park' Project



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Key stakeholders:

- Your Park project staff
- Discovery Team
- Delivery Ranger Team

- PCNPA Decision Makers,
- Groups / organisations working with those facing barriers to engagement in outdoors
 - Staff - decision makers
 - Staff - delivery
 - Service Users

Key words: capacity building, outdoor learning, health and wellbeing, disadvantaged groups, Pembrokeshire,

Your Park is a three-year project, funded by the Big Lottery People and Places programme. It has one year left to run. The project is led by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, and has a Steering Group including Pembrokeshire County Council, PAVS, Communities First, Keep Wales Tidy, Pembrokeshire College, PLANED, Elliots Hill Care Ltd,

Your Park's approach was developed through learning generated from the Mentro Allan project which ran from 2006-10, which researched the best way to engage different sedentary target groups in regular physical activity outdoors. The key principles were that to engage effectively with an organisation's clients there needed to be:

- A 'key individual' within that organisation i.e. Member of staff / volunteer who is effectively engaged with the project acting as point of contact. Known to customers, trusted and able to influence development.
- A focus on 'doorstep activity' – more accessible more often, transport less essential, better use of time, builds relationship with others locally.
- Regular activity - allows leaders and participants to 'normalise' and provides the most significant benefits to Health and Wellbeing.
- Varied activities - Provision of variety of activities aids motivation and engagement.
- A social element / Food and drink outdoors – time to interact with others makes sessions more attractive – food supports this as well as being attractive in itself.
- A participative approach to planning and reflecting upon activity with service users and staff - helps people take ownership and supports behaviour change.
- An ongoing relationship with National Park staff is important to organisations - recognising that few organisations can sustain independent use of the outdoors in long term without support.

Details of the issue addressed

It is well known that regular activity outdoors can offer a wide range of benefits (health and wellbeing, practical, personal and group skills development, citizenship etc.). This is often particularly relevant to people who face extra barriers to engagement.

Despite this, outdoor activity often is not a high priority to organisations who work with disadvantaged groups, preferring to outsource it to 'experts' like National Park staff, or even pay a great deal to specialist providers of adventure activities etc. Increasingly, limited resources prevent this, and regular activity on this basis is not sustainable.

Your Park attempts to empower organisations to access the outdoors without need for such 'gatekeepers', building their capacity to do so whilst allowing National Park staff to put support where it is needed more; leading more 'risky' or specialist activities.

The 'Your Park' model involves two stages:

Stage 1 – Initial Engagement

- Identify main contact (potential 'Key individual') in organisation.
- Initial planning based on needs/ abilities of clients and aims of organisation, Capture baseline information on current use of the outdoors, strengths and weaknesses etc.
- Delivery of initial block of sessions (c5 days or equivalent), to engage customers and staff in the outdoors, and attempt to demonstrate to decision makers that approach is worthwhile. Support staff to begin to lead increasing amount of outdoor activity themselves.



- Begin to link organisation with other opportunities in Pembrokeshire.
- Participative approach employed to plan and review activity with staff and participants.

Stage 2 – Ongoing Support

- Provide training to staff.
- Continue to link organisations with other opportunities.
- Provide access to network of support (staff from other participating organisations / environmental organisations) – facilitated sessions help people reflect on their experience, feel they are part of ‘a journey’ and a ‘movement’.
- Provide advice to help Staff find venues and activities to deliver outdoor sessions
- Special events to help reward and motivate continued involvement
- Provide access to outdoor tools and equipment
- Source practical outdoor conservation tasks for organisations to access if desired
- Develop opportunities for participants to continue their involvement (including PCNPA ‘Youth Ranger’ scheme)



In addition, the project is attempting to develop the involvement of under-represented groups in the corporate work of PCNPA, ultimately to move towards a more 'user-led' approach where 'shared power' is realistic.

Summary of Good Practice within project

Project approach developed as a result of proven methods and consultation with partners and previous participants.

Use of participative methods in workshops, including the quiet voices as well as passionate ones.



The time, knowledge and skill level of project staff has been sufficient to effectively communicate with stakeholders.

Participatory mechanisms have been appropriately resourced in terms of time, scribes etc.

We have actively engaged with stakeholders. In some cases this has resulted in motivated empowered partners. Actual participation of organisations is taking place.

Empowering participating staff to decide their own involvement and deliver their own activities.

Decisions taken jointly between project and participants under positive circumstances – shared power as an outcome.

Timely feedback has been given to stakeholders who have been involved in participatory mechanisms.

Potential improvements to project

Develop a wider range of participatory mechanisms – in addition to workshops and interviews with participants (focus groups, public meetings).

Involve stakeholders throughout project cycle – ideally prior to funder's outcomes and milestones being defined.

Involvement with a wider range of stakeholders would be desirable, including developing other staff and decision makers within my organisation.

Always room to improve on inclusion of quiet voices in participatory mechanisms.

Focus more explicitly on developing shared power outcomes with stakeholders throughout project (Co-production Conference?).

Aim to move more towards ‘Citizen Control’ of project – particularly through building motivation, capacity and implementation factors of Power Holders within organisation to achieve positive outcomes.

How would you rate your approach to the project against the National Principles for Public Engagement?

Principle	Evaluation 1= very poor: 2 = poor: 3 = average: 4 = good: 5 = excellent
Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5</p> <p>Project design effective if participants have motivation and resource to engage. Increased buy-in from my organisation desirable.</p>
Encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 <u>4</u> <u>5</u></p>
Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5</p> <p>Desirable to have involved stakeholders earlier in project cycle</p>
Work with relevant partner organisations	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5</p> <p>Desirable to have more (proactive) involvement from other outdoor delivery orgs / NP delivery staff</p>
The information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 <u>5</u></p> <p>Information is generally relatively simple</p>
Make it easier for people to take part	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5</p> <p>Quiet voices have opportunity to be heard – could be developed further</p>
Enable people to take part effectively	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5</p> <p>More focus on ‘shared power’ development desirable</p>
Engagement is given the right resources and support to be	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5</p>

effective	
People are told the impact of their contribution	<p>1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5</p> <p>Timely feedback provided after participatory events etc – should include more ‘big picture’ stuff</p>
Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement	<p>1 2 <u>3</u> <u>4</u> 5</p> <p>Greater involvement of service users in evaluating project as part of outcomes desirable</p>
