CONFIDENTIAL

Everyday Swim & Good Practice Centres
(April 2009 - March 2010)
Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report has been compiled by the Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) at Sheffield Hallam University on behalf of the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA). Between December 2005 and March 2009 the ASA in partnership with Sport England ran a pilot scheme to encourage more people to swim, entitled Everyday Swim. SIRC was appointed by the ASA and Sport England to monitor and evaluate Everyday Swim in terms of the performance of the programme and to identify learning that could be rolled out more widely throughout the industry.

As the Everyday Swim programme came to an end in March 2009, it was found that there had been a substantial under spend in the budget. With the agreement of Sport England, it decided that the under spend should be invested in extending the duration of Everyday Swim in two local authorities (Islington and Suffolk) and to develop the national role of Everyday Swim by taking a lead in sharing good practice nationally with the industry as it embarked on the challenge of implementing Free Swimming.

For the purposes of this report, Everyday Swim refers to the work undertaken at local level in Islington and Suffolk, whereas Good Practice Centres refers to the national role that staff from these two authorities adopted in helping to share the lessons learnt from Everyday Swim since 2005 more widely. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the impact of Everyday Swim and Good Practice Centres and thereby update the ASA’s intelligence about the processes that might contribute to more swimmers and more swims.

BASELINES AND EXIT POINTS

Chapter 2 of the report analyses the Active People Survey (APS) results to measure the extent to which participation rates and the number of adult swimmers has changed in the pilot authorities. Taking a baseline from APS 1 (2005/6) we compare it with the exit point of APS 2 and 3 combined (2007/09) in order to compare the findings of at least 1,000 respondents in each authority on a ‘before and after’ basis.

### Active People Survey scores for the Everyday Swim authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>APS 1 (%)</th>
<th>APS 2 (%)</th>
<th>APS 3 (%)</th>
<th>APS 2/3 %</th>
<th>Change APS 1 v APS 2/3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easington</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>- 2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolsover</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirral</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islington</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>- 0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirklees</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>- 1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisham</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>- 1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telford &amp; Wrekin</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>- 0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woking</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>- 0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>- 0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The *Everyday Swim* authorities were charged with delivering an increase in swimming participation of 3 percentage points. This was the minimum requirement to achieve a measurable difference using the Active People Survey. One of the *Everyday Swim* authorities, the London borough of Islington, achieved this target and was one of only five out of 354 local authorities in England to record a statistically significant increase in its adult swimming participation rate. Islington also improved its rank in APS 1 from 284/354 to 42/354, an increase of 242 places.

Across the eight authorities included in our final sample, there was a total increase in adult swimmers of 6,904. This finding can be put in context by two key points. First, the overall swimming participation rate for the eight authorities was 13.1% and increased to 13.2% (+0.1%) which should be set against the context of a -0.6 percentage point decrease in the national average. In this regard *Everyday Swim* can be said to have countered the national trend. Second, if the Everyday Swim authorities had followed the national trend, then we would have expected to have seen a reduction in adult swimmers across the eight authorities of around 1,100.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Adults: 2005</th>
<th>APS 1 Rate</th>
<th>Adult Swimmers (APS 1)</th>
<th>Adults: 2008</th>
<th>APS 2 / 3 Rate</th>
<th>Adult Swimmers (APS 2 / 3)</th>
<th>Change in Adult Swimmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easington</td>
<td>75,200</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
<td>8,874</td>
<td>77,400</td>
<td>9.67%</td>
<td>7,485</td>
<td>-1,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolsover</td>
<td>59,500</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>7,081</td>
<td>60,500</td>
<td>12.48%</td>
<td>7,550</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirral</td>
<td>249,700</td>
<td>12.30%</td>
<td>30,713</td>
<td>249,500</td>
<td>14.47%</td>
<td>36,103</td>
<td>5,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islington</td>
<td>154,300</td>
<td>12.30%</td>
<td>18,979</td>
<td>158,400</td>
<td>15.67%</td>
<td>24,821</td>
<td>5,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>562,400</td>
<td>13.16%</td>
<td>74,012</td>
<td>578,400</td>
<td>12.59%</td>
<td>72,821</td>
<td>-1,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisham</td>
<td>204,100</td>
<td>13.70%</td>
<td>27,962</td>
<td>210,400</td>
<td>12.71%</td>
<td>26,742</td>
<td>-1,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telford &amp; Wrekin</td>
<td>126,700</td>
<td>13.80%</td>
<td>17,485</td>
<td>128,300</td>
<td>13.12%</td>
<td>16,833</td>
<td>-652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woking</td>
<td>71,500</td>
<td>15.80%</td>
<td>11,297</td>
<td>73,300</td>
<td>14.94%</td>
<td>10,951</td>
<td>-346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>1,503,400</td>
<td></td>
<td>196,401</td>
<td>1,536,200</td>
<td></td>
<td>203,305</td>
<td>6,904</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings are positive in the context of Sport England's current policies whereby it can be argued that *Everyday Swim* has 'grown' 6,904 swimmers and 'sustained' a further 1,100. If the total cost of the programme is taken to be £3m, then the average cost of generating one new adult swimmer across the programme was around £435. As a whole the cost of £435 per new swimmer compares favourably with the average cost reported per new swimmer aged 60+ in the *Free Swimming* evaluation of £535.

**THE EVERYDAY SWIM GOOD PRACTICE CENTRES 2009/10**

The continued progress of *Everyday Swim* in Islington and Suffolk is detailed in Chapter 3 of the report, illustrating how lessons learnt earlier in *Everyday Swim* have been rolled out more widely. As a Good Practice Centre, Islington looked at expanding four areas of delivery: adult swimming lessons; Liquid Swim; "SuperSwim" / free lessons for young people; and, large scale marketing through the 'Motivation' magazine. Meanwhile, Suffolk focused on the delivery of three key interventions: Aqua Health Clubs; Invitation Days; and, the Liquid Trailer project.

The successes of the two Good Practice Centres are summarised below.
• Ensuring key individuals were in place from the start of *Everyday Swim* and, where possible, keeping those people in place for the duration of the project. This allows continuity in delivery as key individuals can take ownership of the project and also have the drive (and the power within the organisation) to make things happen. This was a particular area of strength in Islington.

• A contract / authority wide focus where the steering group and operating model has control over the project provides a strong base from which to deliver changes (for example, Aquaterra had control over all four pools in Islington). This allows change to be implemented using existing structures where relationships and partnerships are already active.

• In Islington, the coordinator was "not afraid to spend the money" in a way that meant investment in testing and developing products for the programme and promotions to support them were completed. This was complemented by a number of evaluations and reviews taking place to look at where improvements were needed and also to make them sustainable.

• One potential area of 'conflict' in any pool is when programme revamps take place due to the potential to disrupt or upset regular customers. Following assessments of the programmes locally, a number of new ideas were developed. In order to reduce potential conflict the coordinators developed ways to strategically use pool space (e.g. splitting up the pool), create alternative or additional courses for anyone displaced and, where possible, keeping core income generating slots. The integration into the programme of adult swimming lessons is a good example where Islington used programme time that was either unused or under-utilised and allowed new customers the opportunity to swim.

• Creative marketing beyond the four walls was a prominent part of the *Everyday Swim* project. In Islington, 'Motivation' magazine, directions to pools on billboards, street surveys and revised programmes were all examples of marketing used to attract new customers. In Suffolk, the development of 'Invitation Days' in three of the seven Suffolk districts allowed new customers to access facilities. Having the people responsible for marketing involved on the steering group from the outset with the ability to coordinate a consistent message from a central base is an area of strength.

• Making effective use of monitoring & evaluation during the project to evaluate products which then allows improvements and pathways to be developed is a key element for sustaining new products / programmes. For example, the adult swimming lessons in Islington saw the development of a series of surveys which helped to inform the design and implementation of the larger programme.

• The Pool Operators' Group meetings in Suffolk have brought together operators from a wide geographical base and allowed sharing of good practice and networking opportunities to occur.

• Provision of additional resources for the ASA to support wider swimming development work has been published. This has included: case studies and seminars including; top tips for teaching adults; running aqua health clubs; setting up and
running a Pool Operators' Group. Work on producing toolkits / help to support continued professional development are also a lasting legacy of Everyday Swim.

- Activity in the different quadrants of the Ansoff matrix\(^1\) has been tested during Everyday Swim and Good Practice Centres. For example in Suffolk, Liquid Trailers is a good example of product development; Invitation Days is a possible approach to market development; and working with health sector partners represents efforts to diversify. These points highlight the need to take a portfolio approach to stimulate the demand for swimming and conceptually this approach has important implications both locally and nationally.

The Ansoff Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products</th>
<th>Existing</th>
<th>New</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MARKETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>Market Penetration <strong>Same people - doing More</strong></td>
<td>Product Development <strong>New Ideas Same People</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>Market Development <strong>New people same ideas</strong></td>
<td>Diversification <strong>New people new ideas</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NATIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMME**

The Everyday Swim project differed from similar sports development initiatives by being committed to sharing the learning identified from the project with the wider industry on an ongoing basis. In Chapter 4 we report on the five Good Practice Seminars that took place across England in October 2009 aimed at those responsible for the planning, delivery and operational side of activities in swimming pools. Overall, more than 350 delegates from organisations including local authorities, leisure providers, and county sports partnerships attended the seminars. The vast majority (82%) of delegates reported that based on the learning from the Good Practice Seminars at least 'some changes are likely' to their swimming delivery; of these, 18% said that 'many things will change' and according to 8% 'substantial changes will happen'. This is an extremely positive finding and is a testament to the genuinely useful advice that was offered, which delegates felt they could take away and implement.

Although the national seminars proved to be very successful in communicating the Everyday Swim messages to people charged with swimming delivery across the country, these were part of a wider programme of learning developed by the ASA to disseminate the good

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\(^1\) The Ansoff Matrix is concerned with evaluating business growth strategies according to the markets (or customers) a given course of action is designed to reach.
practice identified across the project including email / phone support, visitor days and the monthly free e-newsletter Everyday Swim News. The report also considers how the good practice and learning from Everyday Swim has been addressed and turned into practical solutions for pools nationally.

**STRATEGIC LESSONS**

Chapter 5 takes a strategic overview of the best practice identified from Everyday Swim and the Good Practice Centres. The key points are as follows:

- Price on its own is a blunt instrument by which to achieve market development effects in swimming. The results of Free Swimming indicate that even the investment of unprecedented amounts of additional funding into swimming does not of itself lead to an increase in participation. This finding should be a salutary lesson to all concerned with increasing participation that simplistic solutions are unlikely to work regardless of the scale on which they are rolled out.

- There is a blueprint to drive up swimming participation. In essence, this blueprint consists of three elements: first, creative marketing, notably beyond the four walls of swimming pools; second, structured sessions, particularly swimming lessons for the one in five adults who cannot swim; and, third, culture change throughout the industry to improve the way in which the product of swimming is delivered for customers. In the case of Islington, there is clear evidence of all of elements of the blueprint being in operation.

- Sustainable sports development takes time and this is often an ingredient that is in short supply during projects like Everyday Swim. It is widely accepted that to make a measurable impact at community level requires at least five years' development work. This view is confirmed by Sport England's own research into Sport Action Zones (SAZs) in 2006 which found that significant increases in participation were achieved in two of the four SAZs subject to monitoring and evaluation.

- Swimming is a complex sport with those who seek to increase demand (participation) having little or no control over supply (pool operators). Under these conditions it is inevitable that the pace of change will be slow. However, it should always be borne in mind that swimming has the highest latent demand of any sport in England. Consequently, the challenge facing the industry is to create the conditions whereby this latent demand can be realised. Policy makers in the industry should adopt a long term and pragmatic approach addressing the needs of customers and potential customers, whilst being wary of the impacts of short term gimmicks and attempts at a quick fix.

- The sport and leisure industries are predominantly service industries and customers in part equate the value of their experience with the quality of service they receive from staff. There is considerable learning for the swimming industry to undertake in order to provide customer service that is on a par with competing products and services within and beyond the sport industry. In particular, staff working in the swimming industry should have a much more structured career path.

In conclusion, both Everyday Swim and Free Swimming have been interesting experiments in attempted market development for the industry. The method by which swimming participation will grow in the future is the application of the Everyday Swim blueprint principles in a context sensitive manner by teams of staff who are motivated to succeed.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Everyday Swim and Good Practice Centres

This report has been compiled by the Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) at Sheffield Hallam University on behalf of the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA). Between December 2005 and March 2009 the ASA in partnership with Sport England ran a pilot scheme to encourage more people to swim, entitled Everyday Swim. SIRC was appointed by the ASA and Sport England to monitor and evaluate Everyday Swim and produced an interim report (April 2008) and a final report (June 2009) to document the performance of the programme and to identify learning that could be rolled out more widely throughout the industry. Everyday Swim was a pilot programme and was concerned as much about process (learning about what works), as product (delivering increases in swimming participation).

In the Everyday Swim Final Report, a blueprint was proposed as the way forward to increase swimming participation. In essence, this blueprint was composed of three elements: first, creative marketing, notably beyond the four walls of swimming pools; second, structured sessions, particularly swimming lessons for the one in five adults who cannot swim; and, third, culture change throughout the industry to improve the way in which the product of swimming is delivered for customers.

An industry-wide need to identify 'what works' and to share good practice adopted a hugely increased significance when the then Labour government announced in June 2008 that Free Swimming was to be one of its flagship London 2012 Olympic Legacy programmes. Free Swimming gave England's 354 local authorities the opportunity to provide free access to swimming for people aged under 16 and over 60. Some £140m was earmarked to cover both revenue and capital aspects of the scheme, which was viewed as having a very important contribution to make to Sport England's 'One Million' indicator (that is, one million people doing more sport) and the wider aspiration for two million more people to engage in sport and physical activity.

Approximately 261 local authorities chose to offer Free Swimming for the over 60s of which 197 also extended the offer to young people aged under 16. Free Swimming was a rare example of the public sector, led by five government departments, taking an industrial scale approach to sports development. As part of the Free Swimming programme package, County Swimming Coordinators were appointed in each county to coordinate activity locally and to lever the benefits of the programme.

As the Everyday Swim programme came to an end in March 2009, it was found that there had been a substantial under spend in the budget. With the agreement of Sport England, it decided that the under spend should be invested in extending the duration of Everyday Swim in two local authorities (Islington and Suffolk) and to develop the national role of Everyday Swim by taking a lead in sharing good practice nationally with the industry as it embarked on the challenge of implementing Free Swimming. For the purposes of this report, Everyday Swim refers to the work undertaken at local level in Islington and Suffolk, whereas Good Practice Centres refers to the national role that staff from these two authorities adopted in helping to share the lessons learnt from Everyday Swim since 2005 more widely.

The purpose of this report therefore is to evaluate the impact of Everyday Swim and Good Practice Centres and thereby update the ASA's intelligence about the processes that might contribute to more swimmers and more swims.
1.2. Why encourage more people to swim?

By encouraging more people to take part in sport and physical activity generally, and swimming specifically, various social agendas are being tackled. From the perspective of the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and its post-election successor the Department for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport (DCOMS), there is a commitment to demonstrate that increasing numbers of people are engaging in activities that fall within the Department's remit. DCOMS funds Sport England to increase participation in sport and their relationship is formalised via a Public Service Agreement. Sport England in turn funds National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport, via a commissioning process, to deliver participation increases in their particular sports. Thus it can be seen that there is a direct chain of accountability between DCOMS, its Non-Departmental Public Body for sport (Sport England) and the individual NGBs that Sport England funds.

The contractual arrangements in place to improve participation in physical activity and sport exist because of the perceived benefits that such participation brings. These include amongst others: health benefits for individuals; lower demands on the National Health Service; increased workforce productivity; increased life expectancy; improved lives for families; a gateway to enjoying other water-based activities; and potential for reductions in crime and other anti-social behaviour. It is perhaps no surprise that given these potential benefits that the then DCMS was joined by the Department of Health, the Department for Education, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Communities and Local Government in funding Free Swimming.

Swimming of all sports and physical activities has three key advantages that place it as an ideal vehicle by which to increase physical activity. First, swimming is already the most popular sport in England with some 13% of the adult population taking part at least once in the last four weeks. This is the equivalent of around 5.5m 'regular' adult swimmers and easily eclipses the second most popular sport, cycling which has 3.8m regular participants.

Second, swimming is the sport that consistently demonstrates the highest level of latent demand. In the 2002 General Household Survey, of those people who said they would like to take part in more sport 13% specified swimming as their first choice. This statistic was replicated in Active People 2 (2007/8) and is developed further by the finding that of the 13% who wanted to swim more, 80% were not current swimmers and only 20% were existing swimmers who wished to swim more frequently.

Third, the sports of swimming and diving have very low levels of injury, with the majority of any injuries occurring in diving and higher levels of competitive swimming. Thus unlike impact sports such as football, the health benefits derived from swimming are not diminished by the additional health service costs resulting from the treatment of injuries.

From a business perspective, more swimmers and more swimming occasions would be a positive outcome for pool operators who can realistically expect to see throughput and revenue increase. Other spin off benefits include additional revenue from: swimming lessons; the sale of swimming products; and secondary expenditure on catering and vending services. Whilst these benefits are desirable, they are not handed to operators on a plate and have to be worked for in a competitive environment in which there has never been more competing interests for people's time and money. The purpose of Everyday Swim and Good Practice Centres was, in part, to help the industry to realise the potential opportunities on offer.
1.3. The business logic behind more swimmers and more swimming

By using policy interventions to increase the number of swimmers and the number of swimming occasions, what policy makers are aiming to achieve, is an increase in the 'demand' for swimming. In order to be able to increase the demand for swimming it is important that policy makers understand the factors that influence demand and implement policies that are logically consistent with these factors. It is a generally accepted that for any product there are four determinants of demand, these are:

1. The price of a commodity;
2. The income of potential users;
3. The availability and price of substitutes;
4. The tastes and preferences of consumers.

In the case of swimming, there is an additional sport-specific determinant of demand, which is the availability of supply. Our previous research for the ASA has shown that there is a very strong correlation between the availability of water space for swimming at regional level and the level of adult demand in the regions.

_Free Swimming_ is a good example of how the business logic behind a policy intervention is thought out. In economics it is generally held that the higher the price of a product the lower the demand for that product. Conversely, lower prices and in the case of _Free Swimming_ removing the direct cost of participation completely, should be result in increased demand.

Despite the apparent economic logic behind _Free Swimming_, evidence from Scotland, Wales and England indicates that initiatives such as _Free Swimming_ are characterised by three consistent findings:

1. the principal impact is to encourage those who swim already to swim more frequently;
2. there is very little evidence to support the notion that removing the perceived barrier of price encourages people who were previously non-swimmers to take up swimming; and
3. there is no evidence that free admission to swimming pools has any impact on what are traditionally regarded as being target groups such as people with disabilities, the socially disadvantaged, or people from minority ethnic groups.

One explanation as to why initiatives such as _Free Swimming_ tend not to have the desired effect is because in sport the two most influential determinants of demand are consumers' tastes and preferences and the availability and price of substitutes. In the context of increasing the demand for swimming, we can put these two factors together to pose the question: 'how can we persuade people to give up what they are currently doing with their leisure time and money AND persuade them to value swimming more than they value the leisure activities they currently engage in?'

In the context of business strategy, _Free Swimming_ can be seen as a rather blunt policy instrument by which to try and achieve increases in participation. A more sophisticated approach to business growth strategy, which can be applied to initiatives to increase swimming participation, can be seen in the Ansoff Matrix in Figure 1.1.
The Ansoff Matrix is concerned with evaluating business growth strategies according to the markets (or customers) a given course of action is designed to reach. Applied to swimming, the four quadrants of the matrix can be illustrated with the following examples.

**Market Penetration**
Existing products for existing markets (or customers), for example persuading those who are already swimmers to participate more frequently. Practical examples include incentives for frequent swimmers using price discounts.

**Market Development**
New markets for existing products (i.e. broadening the base of participation in swimming by increasing the total number of swimmers). Market development initiatives have an added value to them relative to market penetration because they increase the number of *swimmers* (people) as well as the number of *swims* (throughput).

**Product Development**
New products for existing markets, for example introducing fun sessions during half terms and holidays to extend usage by existing participants.

**Diversification**
New products designed to attract new markets. In swimming, an initiative such as working with organisations like MEND to introduce physical activity into the lives of overweight and obese people is a good example of how new products can be devised for new customers.

One key point arising from the Ansoff Matrix is that different strategies are required to achieve different objectives. Whilst *Everyday Swim* may in part have been about...
encouraging existing swimmers to swim more often (market penetration) its primary objectives are to persuade those who are not regular swimmers to become regular swimmers (market development). It is for this reason that the key measure of performance for the Everyday Swim project was its effectiveness at increasing swimming participation rates.

1.4. The demise of Free Swimming

As part of a series of public spending savings announced by the new Conservative and Liberal Democrats coalition government on 17th June 2010, the Free Swimming programme is to be cut with effect from 31st July 2010. The principal reason given for this cut is that the DCMS' own evaluation of the programme, conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), and reported by the Minister for Sport indicated that 'the scheme has not delivered value for money nor significantly increased physical activity'. The Minister for Sport, Hugh Robertson MP, is on record as saying:

"the research shows that the great majority of free swimmers were swimming already, and would have paid to swim anyway. With a crippling deficit to tackle and tough decisions to take, this has become a luxury we can no longer afford."

The first year report on Free Swimming indicates that the average cost of generating one new swimmer aged 60+ was £535 and for people aged 16 or under the corresponding statistic was £172. Whilst any reduction in the funding of sport is regrettable, in the case of Free Swimming, the regret can be tempered by the fact that it was not having the desired effect at the time. That is, the primary effect (c. 80%) was existing swimmers swimming more frequently (market penetration), whereas the desired effect, more swimmers (market development) was relatively modest (20%) and not cost effective. Nevertheless, it could be argued that Free Swimming was still very much in its infancy when the decision to withdraw government funding was taken; evidence from Everyday Swim indicates that there tends to be a time lag between interventions being launched and their impacts being recorded, often as a result of an inevitable period of 'capacity building' (associated with networking, forming partnerships and developing marketing strategies) prior to the implementation of initiatives.

There are three key points which arise from the proposed cancellation of the Free Swimming programme. First, our view in the Everyday Swim Final Report that there is no 'magic bullet' that will drive up swimming participation appears to hold. Second, price on its own is shown to be a blunt instrument for achieving market development effects. Third, there is still considerable work to be done to discover 'what works, for whom and in what circumstances' in the context of sports development generally and in swimming participation specifically.

1.5. Report structure

Following this introduction, we proceed to evaluate Everyday Swim's performance against three key areas that are relevant to the project. In Chapter 2 we analyse the Active People Survey results to measure the extent to which participation rates and the number of adult swimmers has changed in the pilot authorities. Taking a baseline from Active People 1 (2005/6) we compare it with the exit point of Active People 2 and 3 combined (2007/09) in order to compare the findings of at least 1,000 respondents in each authority on a 'before and after' basis. Chapter 3 details the continued progress of Everyday Swim in Islington and Suffolk and it illustrates how lessons learnt earlier in Everyday Swim have been rolled out more widely. In Chapter 4 we report on the five Good Practice Seminars that took place across England in October 2009. Finally, Chapter 5 takes a strategic overview of the best practice identified from Everyday Swim and Good Practice Centres in order to refine further our original blueprint to grow swimming participation.
2. BASELINES AND EXIT POINTS

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter we complete our statistical evaluation of the ASA and Sport England Everyday Swim project, by comparing the adult swimming participation rates in the host authorities with their baseline positions. This chapter updates Section 2 of the Everyday Swim Final Report which was completed in June 2009. To complete the analysis we have waited for the data from the third Active People Survey (APS) to become available. For readers who wish to understand fully the context of this chapter, we strongly recommend reading at least Section 2 of the Everyday Swim Final Report.

We concluded our 2009 report by stating that Active People 3 might give a better indication of the impact of Everyday Swim than Active People 2. We made this conclusion for two key reasons. First, in practice there was very little activity taking place on the ground during the early months of APS 2, which resulted in projects being judged against targets they had not had sufficient time to influence. Second, Active People 3 covered the last six months of the Everyday Swim project and six months beyond, which provided an opportunity to look at the sustainability of the project. What is meant by sustainability in this context is assessing whether those people who took up swimming during Everyday Swim maintained their participation afterwards.

In presenting the results we consider the following issues:

- the national context;
- the participation rates in the host authorities;
- the change in the number of adult swimmers in each authority;
- the cost effectiveness of Everyday Swim; and
- the relative achievement of the host authorities.

Each of these issues is considered in turn in the following sections.

2.2. The national context

Since the first Active People Survey conducted in 2005/6, it has been found that adult participation in swimming has been declining and that this decline is statistically significant (i.e. it is likely to be a real decline rather than the result of surveying only a sample of people instead of the whole population). This apparent decline is shown clearly in Graph 2.1 and measures -0.6% between APS 1 in 2005/6 and APS 3 in 2008/9.
Figure 2.1: Adult swimming participation rates in England 1987-2009

Whilst the national average participation rate in swimming may have fallen by -0.6% between APS 1 and APS 2/3, this fall is not evenly distributed by age as shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Adult swimming participation rates by age APS 1 v APS 2/3
The decrease in the swimming participation rates for people in all age groups 16-44 has fallen by an amount that is statistically significant. In the case of those aged 16-19 the fall is -1.7% or almost three times the national average fall of -0.6%. These findings highlight the worrying trend of young people dropping out of sport generally and swimming specifically. Swimming has been identified as one of a number of key sports that Sport England has taken a particular interest in to understand and halt young people's drop out. Our view is that amongst young people, swimming is losing out to competing leisure interests that are not sport-related. The key challenge in business terms then is for the swimming industry to retain the participants it holds from the age of 16. For people aged 45+ none of the changes in participation between APS 1 and APS 2/3 are significant. This finding indicates that for those aged 45+ who take part in swimming, the sport is a habitual part of their lives.

Overall, a reduction in the adult swimming participation rate of -0.6% nationally is the equivalent of 133,000 fewer adult swimmers in England. It is against this national backdrop that the results for the Everyday Swim host authorities should be considered.

2.3. The participation rates in the host authorities

For each of the nine host authorities that took part in the Everyday Swim project, swimming participation rates were extracted from the three Active People Surveys as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Active People Survey scores for the Everyday Swim authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>APS 1 (%)</th>
<th>APS 2 (%)</th>
<th>APS 3 (%)</th>
<th>APS 2/3 %</th>
<th>Change APS 1 v APS 2/3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easington</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>-2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolsover</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirral</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islington</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirklees</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>-1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisham</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>-1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telford &amp; Wrekin</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>-0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woking</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 2.1 we present four scores for each authority, one for each of the three Active People Surveys conducted to date and a fourth measure which is the combined score for APS 2 and APS 3. In APS 1, at least 1,000 interviews were conducted in each local authority in England whereas in Active People 2 and 3 in most authorities the corresponding statistic was 500 interviews. In a sample of 1,000 adults in APS 1 there would typically be 138 adult swimmers and in the Active People 2 and 3 surveys there would be 67 and 65 respectively. In the case of Active People 2 and 3 this is a very small base from which to make wider inferences about the impact of an intervention on an entire community.

Reliance on small sub-sample sizes can create anomalies in the data and this point is well demonstrated by the cases of Bolsover and Kirklees. In both of these authorities Active People 2 shows a statistically significant increase in swimming participation relative to APS 1 and we reported these in good faith in our 2009 report. However, in Active People 3 both
of these authorities recorded a statistically significant decrease in participation relative to APS 2.

A more robust approach would be to combine the results for APS 2 and APS 3 which has two benefits: first, it assesses the performance of Everyday Swim over the duration of the project and six months beyond; and, second, the increased sample size from the merged data set enables more authoritative conclusions to be drawn from the results. It is for these reasons that local authorities adopting National Indicator 8 (NI 8 is a measure of participation in sport and active recreation in Local Authority Agreements) have used the same approach.

It would be somewhat spurious to suggest that Everyday Swim had led to a significant increase in participation in Bolsover in APS 2 and had also led to a significant decrease in the authority's participation rate a year later in APS 3. A better indicator of how the authority has performed is to consider performance over a two year period with an enhanced sample size, which indicates a change of +0.6% over the APS 2 and 3 period which is not a significant change relative to the baseline. Nonetheless, it is a positive finding in the context of the national picture of a -0.6% reduction.

In Table 2.1 the data can be categorised into four clusters that help to interpret the scores for each authority and these are outlined below.

Cluster 1: No significant changes in APS 2, APS 3, or APS 2 and 3 combined

_Easington, Wirral, Lewisham, Telford & Wrekin and Woking_

Whilst these five authorities have fluctuated from their baseline positions, no changes have been statistically significant. In the case of Easington the combined APS 2 and 3 score would have required a fall to 9.2% for the reduction in participation to be significant. In the case of Wirral an APS 2 and 3 score of 15.4% would have been required for the increase in participation to be significant.

Cluster 2: Significant increase between APS 1 and APS 2 and 3 combined

_Islington_

Islington recorded a statistically significant increase in participation between APS 1 and APS 2. In APS 3 there was a slight reduction in participation but this was not significant. Overall the combined scores of APS 2 and APS 3 are sufficient for the difference between them and the baseline to be statistically significant. Islington is one of just five local authorities in England to record a significant increase in adult swimming participation when comparing Active People 1 with Active People 2 and 3 combined.

Cluster 3: Significant increase in APS 2, significant decrease in APS 3, no overall change

_Bolsover and Kirklees_

In Bolsover and Kirklees APS 2 shows a statistically significant increase on the APS 1 baseline, followed by a statistically significant decrease between APS 3 and APS 2. The net effect of these fluctuations is no overall change. Kirklees joined the Everyday Swim project relatively late (December 2006) and had withdrawn from it within a year. In our view, it is inappropriate to include Kirklees within any further analysis because
it is not possible to attribute its performance to *Everyday Swim*. In all subsequent analysis in this report Kirklees is excluded.

Cluster 4: Significant decrease in APS 2, no significant change in APS 3 and no significant change in APS 2 and 3 combined

*Suffolk*

Suffolk was a county-wide intervention based on a sample of 7,000 in APS 1 and 3,500 in each of APS 2 and APS 3. Despite a significant decrease in APS 2 compared with APS 1, Suffolk recovered in APS 3 and overall recorded a score that was comparable to the national picture (-0.6%). However, at county level (n=7,000) a decrease of -0.6% is not statistically significant whereas it is at national level (n=384,000).

**Key Points**

- The *Everyday Swim* authorities were charged with delivering an increase in swimming participation of 3 percentage points. This was the minimum requirement to achieve a measurable difference using the Active People Survey.
- One of the *Everyday Swim* authorities, Islington, achieved this target and was one of only five out of 354 local authorities in England to record a statistically significant increase in its adult swimming participation rate.
2.4. The change in the number of adult swimmers in each authority

Using the swimming participation rates and population data for each authority it is possible to calculate the change in the absolute number of swimmers in each authority as shown below in Table 2.2. Note that population estimates are continually revised by the government and we have used the latest data available. This means that even the baseline figures for 2005/6 have changed for some authorities relative to the Everyday Swim Final Report.

Table 2.2: Change in the number of adult swimmers in the Everyday Swim authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Adults: 2005</th>
<th>APS 1 Rate</th>
<th>Adults Swimmers (APS 1)</th>
<th>Adults: 2008</th>
<th>APS 2 / 3 Rate</th>
<th>Adults Swimmers (APS 2 / 3)</th>
<th>Change in Adult Swimmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easington</td>
<td>75,200</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
<td>8,874</td>
<td>77,400</td>
<td>9.67%</td>
<td>7,485</td>
<td>-1,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolsover</td>
<td>59,500</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>7,081</td>
<td>60,500</td>
<td>12.48%</td>
<td>7,550</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirral</td>
<td>249,700</td>
<td>12.30%</td>
<td>30,713</td>
<td>249,500</td>
<td>14.47%</td>
<td>36,103</td>
<td>5,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islington</td>
<td>154,300</td>
<td>12.30%</td>
<td>18,979</td>
<td>158,400</td>
<td>15.67%</td>
<td>24,821</td>
<td>5,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>562,400</td>
<td>13.16%</td>
<td>74,012</td>
<td>578,400</td>
<td>12.59%</td>
<td>72,821</td>
<td>-1,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisham</td>
<td>204,100</td>
<td>13.70%</td>
<td>27,962</td>
<td>210,400</td>
<td>12.71%</td>
<td>26,742</td>
<td>-1,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telford &amp; Wrekin</td>
<td>126,700</td>
<td>13.80%</td>
<td>17,485</td>
<td>128,300</td>
<td>13.12%</td>
<td>16,833</td>
<td>-652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woking</td>
<td>71,500</td>
<td>15.80%</td>
<td>11,297</td>
<td>73,300</td>
<td>14.94%</td>
<td>10,951</td>
<td>-346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>1,503,400</td>
<td></td>
<td>196,401</td>
<td>1,536,200</td>
<td></td>
<td>203,305</td>
<td>6,904</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Across the eight authorities included in our final sample, there was a total increase in adult swimmers of 6,904. This finding can be put in context by two key points. First, the overall swimming participation rate for the eight authorities was 13.1% and increased to 13.2% (+0.1%) which should be set against the context of a -0.6 percentage point decrease in the national average. In this regard Everyday Swim can be said to have countered the national trend. Second, if the Everyday Swim authorities had followed the national trend, then we would have expected to have seen a reduction in adult swimmers across the eight authorities of around 1,100.

These findings are positive in the context of Sport England's current policies whereby it can be argued that Everyday Swim has 'grown' 6,904 swimmers and 'sustained' a further 1,100. It is also worth noting that in some authorities, notably Easington, the target market for Everyday Swim was young people. The Active People Survey is concerned solely with adults (16+) and there is no corresponding survey of young people. It is therefore possible that our analysis above underestimates the true impact of Everyday Swim as a result of young people, who form 20% of the population, being excluded from the calculations.

Key Points

- The Everyday Swim authorities performed counter to the national trend by increasing average participation rates and the absolute number of adult swimmers.
- Without the intervention it would have been reasonable to expect average participation rates to have fallen and for the number of adult swimmers to have declined.
2.5. The cost effectiveness of *Everyday Swim*

If *Everyday Swim* generated a total of 6,904 new adult swimmers as shown in Table 2.2, then by linking it to the cost of the programme it is possible to compute the average cost per new swimmer. If the total cost of the programme is taken to be £3m, then the average cost per new swimmer across the programme was around £435. It should be noted that at local authority level the average cost per new swimmer will vary considerably. As a whole the cost of £435 per new swimmer compares favourably with the average cost reported per new swimmer aged 60+ in the *Free Swimming* evaluation of £535. These calculations are based on the assumption that the changes in the swimming participation rates in the various authorities can be attributed to *Everyday Swim*, rather than other factors.

Key Points

- The average cost of generating one new adult swimmer was around £435 across the *Everyday Swim* programme.

2.6. The relative achievement of the host authorities

To put the performance of the *Everyday Swim* authorities into a wider context, we can compare their changes in rank order between APS 1 and APS 2/3 relative to the 354 local authorities in England as shown in Table 2.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>APS 1 Rank</th>
<th>APS 2/3 Rank</th>
<th>Change in Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easington</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolsover</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>+63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirral</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>+173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islington</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>+242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk¹</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisham</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telford &amp; Wrekin</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woking</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>-19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Suffolk comparison is made at county rather than local authority level

In addition to Islington being one of only five authorities to record a significant increase in swimming participation, it also improved its rank in APS 1 from 284/354 to 42/354, an increase of 242 places. Whilst Bolsover and Wirral recorded positive changes in their swimming participation rates that were not statistically significant, they nonetheless achieved improvements in rank of 63 and 173 places respectively. These findings suggest that Bolsover and Wirral were heading in the right direction and that *Everyday Swim* was making a difference locally. By contrast, the remaining five authorities recorded negative changes in rank ranging from -1 place (Suffolk) to -46 places (Easington). To put these changes in rank order into a further context, we show in Table 2.4, the starting and closing quartile for each authority, along with the overall change in quartile between APS 1 and APS 2/3.
Table 2.4: *Everyday Swim* authorities' change in quartile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>APS 1 Quartile</th>
<th>APS 2/3 Quartile</th>
<th>Change in Quartile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easington</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolsover</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirral</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islington</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk¹</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisham</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telford &amp; Wrekin</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woking</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Suffolk comparison is made at county rather than local authority level

Table 2.4 reveals three key points. First, *Everyday Swim* was primarily taken up by authorities in the third and fourth quartiles, with the fourth quartile (the lowest 89 ranked authorities) being the most common starting point. This finding indicates that *Everyday Swim* was taken up in areas of need, which is a positive outcome. Second, the three authorities that recorded increases in their swimming participation rates also experienced positive changes in their quartile rankings: Bolsover +1; Wirral +2; and Islington +3. Islington is the second most improved authority in England in terms of its improvement in ranks and quartiles. Third, for the five authorities that recorded negative changes in their ranks, none experienced a change large enough to change quartile, which in turn suggests relatively minor fluctuations in local participation rates.

**Key Points**

- *Everyday Swim* was taken up by local authorities with a genuine need to improve their adult swimming participation rates.
- Islington, Wirral and Bolsover all recorded positive increases in both rank and quartile between APS 1 and APS 2/3. Whilst the changes in Wirral and Bolsover were not statistically significant, they demonstrate strong movement in the right direction.
- For those authorities which recorded decreases in participation and a reduction in rank, none experienced a fall in quartile.

**2.7. Conclusion**

Compared with our *Everyday Swim* Final Report (2009) in which we reported the programme had led to an increase of around 11,000 new adult swimmers, the 2010 update suggests that a more accurate figure is more like 7,000. The main cause of this reduction is the fluctuation in the participation rate in Bolsover which showed a statistically significant increase between APS 1 and 2 and a statistically significant decrease between APS 2 and 3. A better indicator of this and the other authorities' scores is to compare the baseline with a merged APS 2 and 3 data set, which in the case of Bolsover shows a small but not statistically significant increase over the life of *Everyday Swim*.

The factors which we consider to have been instrumental in bringing about change, remain unaltered and are documented in full in the 2009 report. In the case of Easington (-2.1%), it was always going to be difficult to increase participation in a local authority with one publicly available swimming pool with little or no additional capacity. Easington has around
9m² of water per 1,000 head of population and this is around half the national average. There is a positive to be drawn from the learning in Easington, which is that when designing programmes of this type in the future, the supply side must be taken much more into account than it was at the outset of Everyday Swim.

In the case of Islington, there is clear evidence of all of elements of the Everyday Swim critical success factors' blueprint being in operation: namely: structured sessions; creative marketing; and culture change. Furthermore, Islington is also distinguished by implementing Everyday Swim on a consistent, authority-wide basis in partnership with a registered charity contractor (Aquaterra). Islington was the third most improved local authority in terms of its increase in participation rate and was also the second most improved in terms of its increase in rank relative to other authorities. At Aquaterra's other site, Bath and North East Somerset, the adult swimming participation rate increased by more than 2 percentage points raising the authority from 68th in APS 1 to 5th in APS 2 and 3. The key lessons from the Islington experience are: first, the importance of taking a strategic whole of authority approach, or 'industrialisation'; and, second, there may be much to be gained by working in partnership with the private and charitable sectors for whom driving up participation is entirely consistent with business and social objectives.
3. THE EVERYDAY SWIM GOOD PRACTICE CENTRES 2009/10

3.1. Islington overview

Chapter 2 outlined that Islington was one of only five authorities nationally (out of 354) to achieve a statistically significant increase in adult participation between Active People 1 and Active People 2/3 combined. Islington was also the only one out of the eight Everyday Swim authorities during the original timeframe of the project which achieved a statistically significant increase between AP1 and AP2 and the latest figures add further testament to the good practice in Islington. The first part of this chapter outlines how Islington expanded and 'rolled out' some of the good practice from the Everyday Swim project into the day to day delivery of aquatic activity. The second part of the chapter develops the activities and progress of Everyday Swim and Good Practice Centre in the county of Suffolk.

3.2. Islington as a Good Practice Centre

The original focus for Islington took a community-wide approach to bring some of the good practice from an already successful dry side operation to the wet side i.e. 'bringing the gym culture to the pool'. The additional year of Everyday Swim (alongside the Good Practice Centre status) allowed Islington to expand areas of their wet side delivery and increase the capacity of the programme, primarily using product development. This was based on the business development undertaken in the first two years of the project. The structure for the activities which were undertaken in the Good Practice Centre year were already in place and the project aimed to increase the capacity based on the learning from Everyday Swim. Furthermore, Islington embraced the idea of culture change during the initial process which was a key learning point and examples are shown throughout this chapter.

Everyday Swim started in Islington in January 2007 and, when taking into account the Good Practice year, the project ran for two years and four months. Notwithstanding this, the learning, practice and operational developments during this period are continuing beyond the project as the co-ordinator holds a role in the Aquaterra team. Initiatives ran in all four Aquaterra sites; Ironmonger Row Baths (IRB), Highbury Pool, Cally Pool and Archway Pool. The focus on the Good Practice Centre year in Islington looked at expanding four areas of delivery:

- Adult swimming lessons;
- Liquid Swim;
- "SuperSwim" / free lessons for young people; and
- Large scale marketing through 'Motivation' magazine.

Further to the specific details of the Islington intervention, the two GPC centres had a role to play in disseminating good practice and hosting support via telephone and electronic communication for other practitioners wanting further information. This support was in addition to the series of five seminars which took place in autumn, 2009.
3.3. Strength of the operating model

The format

The Everyday Swim Final Report outlined that the strength of performance from the Islington intervention stemmed from the strong and stable base provided in the operating model from the outset. The value that the coordinator in Islington had on business development activities was recognised and plans were in place to retain the services of the position regardless of the additional year of Everyday Swim. This early recognition of the post and the decision to retain it allowed the momentum of the original intervention to be maintained and meant there were no interruptions to the Everyday Swim work.

Outcomes

Since the start of Everyday Swim, Aquaterra has employed two full time swimming development management positions (including mainstreaming the post that was the coordinator's). Furthermore, two swimming development coordinator posts have been created (although this is not confined to Islington but also covers Aquaterra's pools in the South West). Staff development from Everyday Swim has also started the process to create full time posts for aquatics teachers. The idea is to move away from a culture of part-time casual and session only teachers to a structured professional career in aquatics. One of the pools in Islington was due to close for refurbishment at the end of the Good Practice Centre year and vital learning from Everyday Swim has been integrated into the building requirements. For example, knowledge from consultations during Everyday Swim increased awareness of the requirements needed for a site to be able to run training courses to teach swimming teachers. Senior staff worked to ensure that adequate facilities were included in the re-building process, such as the provision of lecture facilities.

Emergent learning and good practice

The philosophy of the Everyday Swim project in Islington was simply 'getting the basics right' where a blend of the simple delivery elements required were complemented by adding value to the customer experience using some of the 'dry' side approach to customer relationships. The Everyday Swim Final Report concluded with a phrase coined from Islington’s steering group to do "one hundred things 1% better rather than doing one thing 100% better" to improve delivery. By having a strong and consistent steering group and operating model, Islington was able to make the big decisions but also look at all the smaller areas of delivery which impact on the whole experience of swimming. One example of making the small differences count in Islington was around swimwear policy. Aquaterra looked at their existing swimwear policy and revised them based on some of their own learning and work undertaken in the other Everyday Swim areas, notably Woking. The revised policy makes admissions to the pool more relaxed and designed to welcome as many people to the pool as possible by removing this potential barrier to participation.

3.4. Good Practice Centre activity

The following section summarises how Islington developed their existing work following the awarding of the Good Practice Centre status.
Adult swimming lessons

The format

A key area of business development in Islington was the provision of adult swimming lessons which were introduced originally as a free trial. The rationale behind providing adult lessons was twofold. First, research by the ASA following the Athens Olympics indicated that 21% of adults are unable to swim and this figure increases with age. Second, the high level of latent demand for swimming outlined in the introduction means that attracting people who currently do not swim because they are unable to, but would like to start, has the potential to yield thousands of new customers. Aquaterra staff also indicated in a staff survey that the adult swimming lessons were the area of delivery which had seen the greatest improvements as a result of Everyday Swim and continued product development took place during the third year.

The aim of the additional year of Everyday Swim was to expand the adult lessons into a structured system where pathways and exit routes were provided. Figures generated by the swimming lesson database are presented in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Adult swimming lesson spaces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spaces available during GPC year</th>
<th>2,146</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Filled spaces</td>
<td>1,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New swimmers</td>
<td>739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of swimmers who were &quot;new&quot; swimmers</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An example of the growth of the adult lessons can be seen by comparing the structure pre-Everyday Swim with the current capacity. Prior to Everyday Swim, Islington had 180 places available per block of adult lessons across the four sites. The third year of Everyday Swim saw two blocks with 400 spaces followed by two blocks of 750 spaces over the course of the year. This is a good example of how the product has been developed, modified and grown through Everyday Swim into its current form. It was first trialled as a free offer through the Motivation magazine which was evaluated and then re-run under a "ten lessons for £10". Further evaluation took place which fed into the development of the revised programme.

Emergent learning and good practice

One of the key areas of learning through the process of feedback from Islington's adult swimming lessons was that adults who have demand for lessons are not homogenous. The customers for this service could range from people who had never tried swimming, people who could swim but had lost their confidence, people who hadn't been swimming for years and wanted to start again and people who wanted to improve their existing technique before entering mainstream sessions. By identifying and differentiating between people's needs the programme was developed to include four levels where natural progressions through pathways were available, with exit routes into mainstream swimming sessions outside the lesson structure.

The evaluation

The steering group commissioned two online surveys during Everyday Swim and one during the Good Practice Centre year to evaluate: the demographic profile of the customers; the delivery; the marketing; the use of and awareness of pathways / exit routes; changes in swimming ability; and, staffing. This new knowledge was originally used to launch the larger programme which took place in the third year. The programme devised an “easyJet” style policy on pricing based on customer feedback where the more popular time slots were
charged at a higher price than the less popular slots. A mix of the different ability level sessions were also provided at a range of times and days. Furthermore, pool space was maximised by dividing up the pool to allow multiple lessons to occur at the same time. An example of the programme with the different levels of ability can be seen in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Islington's revised Adult Swimming Lesson programme

As the programme shows, the more popular time slots in the early evenings (after office hours) were charged at £24 and the less popular slots such as early mornings and late evenings were cheaper at £8 for an eight week course. The programme also shows the pathway which customers could follow from starting at "Beginner" level and working through "Development", "Refresher" and finally "Introduction to Fitness Swimming". Feedback from customers about the revised programme undertaken through the online survey was positive. The results indicated that 80% of those people who had been on an adult lessons programme had re-booked on another course following its completion. This occurred through a combination of those people who continued at the same level and those people who progressed to the level above. Of those people responding to the survey, half stated that they
went swimming between lessons to practice what they had learnt in the lesson. This is an indication of one additional benefit of introducing new customers through this scheme as the provision of the lesson results in additional throughput. Moreover, 94% said that they would continue in Aquaterra's next set of lessons and 86% said that they could see themselves becoming 'regular' swimmers once they had completed their progression through the courses. Some of the sample comments included:

"All the instructors I have encountered in Islington have been excellent."

"I think it is a great initiative as it enables those of us who did not learn whilst at school to have another go at it later in life. Long may they continue."

"Adult lessons are a brilliant idea - keep them going."

"I'd like to praise the local authority for encouraging the local community to take up swimming, both as an effective form of regular exercise and also highlighting the benefits and sheer enjoyment of swimming. The teaching methods and standard of instructor deserve nothing but plaudits."

**Outcomes**

The growth of the programme from the original state, the feedback from customers, the layers of options for different ability levels within the programme, the pathways and exit routes and the number of people who have enrolled on the programme are all indicators of the successful delivery. The commitment by the coordinator and steering group to review and evaluate the courses along the way also played a key role in developing the product from its original trial form as a free taster course. Adult swimming lessons are now a major part of the delivery in Islington with 72 sessions in the weekly programme across the four pools. These sessions provide structured pathways which has a three tiered pricing policy.

**Liquid Swim**

**The format**

Liquid Swim was another key change in the swimming offer in Islington. Liquid Swim is the programme for new customers and features one-to-one sessions with a swimming instructor and it continued in Islington having being trialled during Everyday Swim. Having gone through the learning curve around delivery of the product during the second year of Everyday Swim, the third year looked to grow the number of customers using it. By giving swimmers the opportunity of one-to-one tuition, following a similar model which is traditionally used on 'dry' side activities, the personal element of the product is designed to keep members engaged in swimming.

**The evaluation**

At the end of the second year of Everyday Swim in March 2009, 320 people had been on the programme in the year since its inception (2008/09). At the end of March 2010, at the conclusion of the third year, the Liquid Swim database indicated that 816 people had accessed the programme or 496 new users in 2009/10.

**The outcomes**

One of the main benefits of Liquid Swim is around retention of customers using a similar approach used in the gym. Comparisons have been made between the retention figures for
Liquid Swim members against the retention data for all members to see the impact it has on membership retention, as shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Liquid swim effect on member retention 2009/10

Figure 3.2 shows that those members using Liquid Swim have a higher level of retention than 'normal' members and the gap between retention rates also increases with time. One interesting finding was that Liquid Swim proved to be more popular with females who accounted for 61% of enrolments.

**Emergent learning and good practice**

Liquid Swim is an example of how using best practice from the 'dry' side of the business has been incorporated into the 'wet' side. The product has also provided a useful professional development opportunity for Aquaterra staff members who could be trained to deliver the service. By introducing the product on a phased basis, starting in one pool and building it up has allowed Islington to develop the product, test it and learn the lessons before increasing its availability.
**Free swimming lessons for young people**

Although Islington took up the option of the national *Free Swimming* initiative for under 16s they also offered free swimming lessons for young people through the third year of *Everyday Swim*. The target was to fill 450 places between the swimming lessons and the "SuperSwim" summer scheme which had been in place in previous summers. Data from the reporting system shows that there were 418 applications for free swimming lessons and a further 107 people accessed "SuperSwim", a total of 525 places filled.

**Facility Level Analysis**

*The format*

The throughput data for the four Aquaterra pools was supplied at the outset of the project for the previous four years (2003/04 to 2006/07), for the two years of *Everyday Swim* (2007/08 to 2008/09) and for the GPC year (2009/10) as shown in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3: Annual swims 2003/04 to 2009/10**

Throughput in Islington has, for the first two years of *Everyday Swim* (in red) and the third year (in green) been higher than in previous years other than 2006/07 where the particularly hot weather caused major increases in usage during the summer months. Despite some minor site closures in the third year, throughput in 2009/10 almost matched the level of 2008/09 and was the third highest out of the seven years worth of data.

*The evaluation*

Although no detailed analysis is required on the throughput data, Table 3.2 outlines the site specific changes in throughput between the first year of *Everyday Swim* and the final year.
Table 3.2: Changes in throughput by individual pool - year one to year three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pool</th>
<th>ES Yr1 compared with ES Good Practice Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>INCREASE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archway</td>
<td>INCREASE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cally</td>
<td>DECREASE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highbury</td>
<td>NO CHANGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB</td>
<td>DECREASE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Archway pool was the key driver in increasing throughput with 29,000 additional swims between the first year of Everyday Swim and the third year. The decreases at Cally and Ironmonger Row were relatively small in relation to their overall throughput (6% and 11% respectively).

**Marketing**

Another area of strength throughout the Islington delivery of Everyday Swim in Islington was the integration of the Aquaterra Marketing Team to the Steering Group, a point made at length in the Everyday Swim Final Report. As with many aspects of Islington's delivery, this operating model remained in place and also resulted in the marketing manager being involved in the national Good Practice Centre seminars, co-presenting the 'Creative Marketing' workshop.

**Evaluation**

During the third year, three editions of the magazine 'Motivation' were produced which featured Everyday Swim news, in April and August 2009 and January 2010. The August edition of motivation magazine was funded by Everyday Swim. The magazine was dropped to all households in Islington and was used to raise awareness of the project and swimming in general to residents. Vouchers were offered in the magazine to redeem "Swim for £1" which generated 2,615 returns. This was a slight increase to a similar offer in year two where 2,071 vouchers were used. An additional free prize draw saw 462 vouchers returned.

**Emergent learning and good practice**

The development of the magazine, which was delivered to every household in Islington, proved a great resource to promote the benefits of swimming, the courses and programmes on offer through Aquaterra such as the revised adult swimming lessons and, importantly, maps and directions to each of the pools. The continued support of the marketing team also allowed in-house ownership of the promotions and enabled the key personnel to drive this side of the delivery. There was a clear message about the benefits and the publication was an ideal way to promote the revised adult swimming lesson programme alongside existing sessions.

**3.5. Islington conclusion**

The third year of Everyday Swim in Islington allowed the learning and business development which occurred during the two years of Everyday Swim to underpin the continued delivery of existing programmes, but on a much greater scale. The value of the coordinator working on business development was such that the position has been integrated into the Aquaterra staff structure in Islington. By identifying and understanding the value of the basic levels of service delivery across all areas of the wet side, Islington has seen one of only five statistically significant increases in swimming participation nationally.
There are a combination of factors in the project which contributed to the statistically significant increase in the adult swimming participation rate between APS1 (12.3%) and APS2/3 (15.7%). Throughput in the borough's pools was higher for the three years where Everyday Swim operated compared with the previous years of operation apart from 2006/07 where there unusually high numbers were driven by particularly hot summer weather. The three years of Everyday Swim were the second, third and fourth highest levels of throughput in the previous seven years worth of data. The increased level of supply from the neighbouring borough of Hackney (Clissold Pool) during Everyday Swim has not had a negative impact on participation levels or throughput in Islington.

3.6. Suffolk overview
Everyday Swim in Suffolk ran from September 2006 to March 2009 and was followed by the extension of the third year from 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010. Two part-time coordinators were jointly responsible for its delivery. The awarding of Good Practice Centre status to Suffolk was announced in mid-March 2009, the coordinators reported that this resulted in some loss in momentum for the project. Initially there were short planning horizons, as many interventions were scheduled to come to a close at the end of March 2009. However the additional year of Everyday Swim funding meant that the coordinators could continue to work towards driving existing and new interventions forwards for an additional one year period.

3.7. Suffolk as a Good Practice Centre
The awarding of the Good Practice Centre status enabled Suffolk to expand the focus of their programme from predominantly the 45+ age group and people within rural communities, to a more community wide approach tackling health inequalities. The third year of Everyday Swim in Suffolk focused on the delivery of three key interventions: aqua health clubs; invitation days; and the Liquid Trailer project.

- The new aqua health club programme began delivery in May 2009 and ran for a full year offering seven courses in total across four swimming pool sites.
- The invitation days were all scheduled for spring 2010 and in total seven were held.
- The Liquid Trailer programme was ongoing as this built upon delivery from the original Everyday Swim project, expanding the usage and developing resources to support usage.

In addition to these three core activities, the successful Pool Operators' Group continued to take place on a quarterly basis and further good practice from this group was collected. In addition to this, the GPC undertook a role in the sharing of good practice nationally via the series of five GPC national seminars in October 2009, plus an ongoing telephone support service and the offering of visitor days. The following sections focus on each individual intervention - providing a background to the set up of each, explaining the processes involved, highlighting good practice and emergent learning points, and giving recommendations for future delivery.
3.8. Good Practice Centre activity

*Aqua Health Clubs*

**The format**

The Aqua Health Club format was marketed as providing "a relaxed, informal and non-judgemental introduction to swimming in an holistic way". This included offering enhanced, low cost swimming opportunities and the provision of support from health specialists. The Aqua Health Club product is bespoke, flexible and responsive to customer needs. It was specifically aimed at individuals who do not currently swim are overweight and / or suffer from health problems.

It’s not a slimming club, although weekly weighing and measuring is an option for anyone who wants it. The sessions help to re-educate people to achieve a healthier lifestyle, including water-based fun exercise.

There is a loose structure to the 12 week programme with specific delivery areas confirmed by the needs of the participants – this could include areas such as: hypnotherapy, weight management, fear / coping strategies, relaxation techniques, nutritional advice and a focus on the social side of participation. An example of the strong social element of the project included each participant bringing food in on the final week for a celebratory session of swimming followed by a healthy meal. Participant quotes also commented on the ‘banter’ and benefits of the group environment:

“The banter has been good, there’s no pressure to do anything, it’s down to you”

“I have lost a stone and 4lbs. Just go and do it. There was a lot of stuff which I knew but have ignored, but when you are together in a group you are more likely to do it. The group was supportive rather than competitive. I also learnt to do the front crawl”.

The Aqua Health Club project has provided a package of activities and support which combines: swimming or other water-based exercise each week, advice from health experts including nutrition, food taster / recipe sessions, personal water-based fitness programmes, swimming tuition for non-swimmers and refreshments.

**Joined up working**

The Primary Care Trust (PCT) has been heavily involved and has supported the programme, including sitting on the steering group. There are also links with the MEND project (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do-it), as Ipswich in particular is an obesity hotspot. There is a strong willingness for the PCT and GPs to work together on a referral system for directing participants to swimming and the Aqua Health Clubs have provided an impetus to support this goal. Endorsement by, and input from, the health sector helps to support the future sustainability of the programme, as these external partners could take responsibility directing participants to appropriate sessions.
Evaluation

A system of evaluation was established to assess individuals on signing up to the scheme, and then followed up by a repeat survey at the end of the 12 weeks. This evaluation included assessing motivations, goals and how much swimming (if any) respondents were taking part in. A second survey at the end of the programme assessed the benefits for participants involved in the programme, including measuring any changes in health and wellbeing, confidence and self esteem, attitudes and behaviour. The exit strategy for participants included open swimming sessions with a lifeguard present, plus the optional opportunity to continue the weekly weigh in and health monitoring.

From the initial pilot all 21 participants completed the course and all paid their £10 membership fee. Attendance and retention levels were excellent, with 240 attendances out of a possible 252. In terms of sustainability 12 of the 21 original members (57%) are continuing to swim and to be weighed in on a weekly basis.

Key achievements of the first Aqua Health Club course included three complete non swimmers learning to swim and all others improving their strokes and confidence. Of these, a further three participants requested structured swimming programmes to be set for them to follow and interested parties have also been encouraged to use the 'swimfit' programme online. In the initial 12 weeks of the course, the total weight loss for the group reached 82½ lbs (an average of 4 lbs per participant). There was also a waist circumference loss of 80cms for the group (an average of 2cm per participant) and a reduction in overall BMI of participants of 13.8 points, prompting one participant to say “I’ve lost 6lbs and 8cm round my waist”. These statistics were significant enough to encourage and support the wider roll out of the project with additional venues and subsequent courses. Qualitative feedback included a comment from 72 year old Katherine who was terrified of water until she came to the sessions. Katherine now swims quite confidently:

“Don’t worry about what you look like in a costume, everyone makes you feel really special, and if I can become water confident and lose weight at my age then anyone can”.

Additional participant quotes included:

“I am finding the course enlightening. There are so many messages about health and nutrition it’s great to get a clear picture”.

“This was a real kick start to a healthy lifestyle”

“I am so much more confident. I can now go underwater and finally do front crawl after trying to do it for 30 years”.

“If I hadn’t attended this course I would still be afraid of the deep end”

“You don’t feel stupid because there are lots of other people here in the same boat”

“I have more energy and don’t feel as stiff”
Outcomes -

- There were positive signs of continued / increased participation in swimming with 65% of respondents reporting that they had been swimming in the last four weeks outside of the course.
- Respondents reported a significant increase in their enjoyment of sport / exercise from a mean average score of 4.5 at the start to 7.1 at the end of the courses.
- Overall participation in physical activity also recorded an increase (from 33% of participants undertaking some form of physical activity at the onset, to 76% by the end of the course).

Emergent learning and good practice

The Aqua Health Club project is an effective way to provide a holistic lifestyle change programme for hard to reach non-participants. The group environment and integration of physical activity, along with other health checks and lifestyle guidance have demonstrated positive impacts in terms of weight loss, participation levels, confidence and enjoyment of physical activity / exercise. However due to the resource intensive nature of the programme delivery, it would require significant ongoing commitment to fund such courses to create opportunities for a large number of participants. It is therefore unlikely that a programme of this type could impact significantly on participation levels at community level, however it is successful as a health improvement initiative and the early findings on participant retention levels and sustainability have been encouraging.

Things to avoid / recommendations

Any future courses should be delivered as true partnership projects with health professionals, PCTs and other weight loss / health initiatives - this would create opportunities for courses to be sustained over the longer term. If the impetus to drive future delivery of courses is solely reliant upon facility-based leisure centre staff, then it is likely that limited resources may be diverted towards delivering sessions and projects with a wider participation impact which are less resource intensive to market and deliver. However the impact of the Aqua Health Clubs contributes to wider public health agendas and has demonstrated benefits (although on a small scale) in relation to increased health and wellness, enhanced confidence and weight loss. Furthermore achievements in terms of engaging hard to reach groups and increasing their participation levels were noted which could be linked in to current health initiatives.

Pool Operators’ Group

The format

There are seven local authority districts in Suffolk and each has its own pool provider. These pool providers include trusts, local authorities, and national leisure operators. The seven district pool providers traditionally worked independently, often considering each other to be direct competitors. However the Everyday Swim coordinators in Suffolk succeeded in generating engagement from all seven pool providers and from this developed a county-wide Pool Providers’ Network group. The group met quarterly and the location was rotated around all sites to accommodate all partners and to allow providers to tour each other’s facilities. They also invited a guest speaker to each meeting and utilised the network as a forum for discussing national issues (such as the Government's Free Swimming initiative), as well as local issues. Guest speakers have included Center Parcs, who discussed retention ideas for
both staff and customers. The group facilitates the sharing of information, discussion of good practice and the opportunity for a more united approach to the delivery of swimming across the county.

**Outcomes**

Suffolk has acted as a ‘lab’ to test out the format and function of ‘Pool Operators' Groups’ which have then been rolled out nationwide. A recent survey of all the Senior County Swimming Coordinators (CSCs) found that nearly 90% of all counties have implemented a ‘Pool Operators' Group’. Some of these areas already had an existing group which has been expanded to include all relevant stakeholders. However the majority of counties have established new groups and are intending for these groups to remain as a permanent network.

The successes from the ‘Pool Operators' Group’ have included:

- Testing out ideas without incurring the full cost;
- Joint marketing opportunities, such as sharing the cost of launching new programmes;
- Piloting and managing the ‘10 pound swim’ programme before the launch of the *Free Swimming* ‘access lessons’;
- Various cost saving benefits – it was estimated that the average cost saving on marketing campaigns alone to launch each new programme was £180 per pool;
- Joint outreach work;
- Greater awareness of good practice, learning from the delivery of others, funding opportunities etc;
- Shared equipment and maintenance costs e.g. the ‘liquid trailer’ programme;
- Launching the ‘aqua health club’ programme;
- Networking; and
- Joint training.

Further comments from the pool operators in Suffolk included:

“*Relationships with other pool managers have been strengthened, realising that we are all trying to achieve the same goals*”

“It is excellent to be able to hear others' experiences of similar activities to mine”

“*[Our future ambition is for] more of the same... open and constructive collaboration*”

“The use of shared equipment such as Liquid Trailers has provided cost sharing opportunities to ascertain need and demand for various equipment, without full cost of maintenance / commitment”.

27
Emergent learning and good practice

In terms of learning and good practice from the pool operator's network, it is clear that substantial benefits have arisen from its development and this has been sufficient to promote the development of similar groups nationwide. These groups are likely to increase the coordination of local swimming provision, facilitate shared learning and possibly enhance the efficiency of delivery by encouraging resource sharing initiatives and joined up working. In terms of top tips from Suffolk, it is essential that an appropriate member of staff is sent to the providers’ meeting (senior level) to make the network effective. In cases where a pool provider sent a relatively inexperienced representative, these people were less able to contribute to discussion, which impacted on the productivity of the meeting. However, bringing such a representative in addition can be a useful ‘shadowing’ experience to gain new skills and knowledge.

Liquid Trailers

Format

A perceived lack of equipment at the pools to engage the 13 plus age group into aquatic activities was the driving force behind the design and purchase of the 'Liquid Trailers'. Furthermore, a focus group conducted with young people said that pools were ‘boring’ so it was agreed that something needed to be done to increase variety, opportunities and to hopefully engage with young people. Within Suffolk all pools worked in isolation, with no equipment sharing scheme. The pool operators were also unwilling to invest in untested equipment when they were unsure about the likely level of uptake and the impact it would have on customers.

In response to these findings, two trailers and various types of aquatic equipment (including jet skis, sea scooters, blow up kayaks, surfboards, stepping stones, unusual swimming equipment such as the freestyle snorkel, sub-skates, aqua disks - underwater Frisbees - plus aqua aerobics kit such as wrist and ankle weights, body belts and dumb bell floats) were purchased and used at pools across the county during the early Everyday Swim summer period.

The dimensions of the trailers were: 4ft wide x 4ft high x 8ft long, which enables them to be towed by a standard car without the need for mirror extensions. The equipment was covered by each pool’s insurance policy and a contract for liability was signed by each pool provider. Pools were given equipment instructions, maintenance notes and some examples of how to utilise the equipment. It was hoped that local staff would lead on the usage of Liquid Trailers and drive new ideas forward rather than be instructed on how best to use it. As each pool handed the equipment to the next they were encouraged to communicate their successes, examples of good practice, and any issues they may have had with the equipment through a document in circulation and by word of mouth.
The vision for the Good Practice Centre period was to develop the use of this Liquid Trailer project and build opportunities around the ‘engaging teens’ programme. From a practical perspective the need to update and maintain the equipment was also factored into the project. The overarching aim was for the trailers to be in “constant or regular use” by pools and for these pools to run 5 x 5 week courses to introduce new participants to the equipment. The main usage of the trailers was focused upon five pools, within four districts of Suffolk: Newmarket pool in Forest Heath, Stradbroke and Stowmarket pools in Mid Suffolk and Hadleigh pool in Babergh.

In order to expand the usage of the Liquid Trailer equipment it was agreed to fund the development of a series of cards. A set of six ‘liquid activity cards’ were also designed to support deliverers in their use of the equipment, to encourage creativity, provide links to other activities and to ensure that participants had fun. The cards focused on: masks and snorkels, stepping stones, mono fins, underwater skateboards, sea scooters and canoes. Deliverers were advised to use the cards in the ways that best suited them, from following them to the letter to using them for a little inspiration to create their own games.

Evaluation

From summer 2009 an innovative and interactive evaluation system was put into practice, in order to collect evidence to demonstrate the impact of the Liquid Trailer scheme. This evaluation tool kit included a revised reporting form and easy to complete survey for the pool managers or staff to complete, as well as participant evaluation mechanisms which became part of the equipment provided in the trailer itself. The evaluation tool kit for participants included water-proof versions of flipcharts (‘magic white boards’) which were used as ‘graffiti boards’ to collect participant feedback.

It was hoped that this method would move the evaluation process away from asking young people to complete surveys (particularly in a wet pool-side environment where the most effective feedback can be gathered immediately) into a method that was more fun and interactive. Disposable cameras were also provided to photograph the boards before wiping them clean and returning them to the trailer – full instructions were also included in the tool.
kit. The evaluation received a mixed response in terms of buy in from the pools with evaluation data limited to two – Newmarket and Stradbroke.

Outcomes

The evaluation highlighted that the average number of participants per session was 20, with an average age of 12 years. The gender split of participants over a week in the summer holidays (120 participants in total) was fairly evenly balanced (56% male v 44% female). The evaluation has shown that marketing has been primarily limited to inside the four walls of the centre using posters and flyers. There has been some exposure on pool websites and local radio, but this has been minimal. The qualitative data collection from participants showed a very positive response to the sessions. The jet skis and canoes were consistently rated as the most popular equipment in terms of both usage and desire to purchase.

Emergent learning and good practice

Overall the Liquid Trailer project has been well received by deliverers and participants. However its integration into mainstream pool programmes has been limited. The usage data indicates that the Liquid Trailer programme is still viewed as 'holiday time' fun sessions, rather than the opportunity to try sessions out and then progress into appropriate other swim / aquatic sessions. Unfortunately there is no longitudinal tracking data from participants to show whether they have been inspired to increase levels of participation and to translate this enthusiasm into sustained aquatic participation. The liquid cards (complete with photos and cartoons) are now available as a permanent resource to support the best usage of equipment and to provide ideas and inspiration for deliverers. These cards could be to be rolled out on a national basis. The Liquid Trailer project has the potential to demonstrate to young people that there is much more to 'swimming' than simply lane swimming for fitness or to improve skills and that a diverse range of aquatic opportunities are available. Perhaps most importantly and realistically, the impact of the scheme is to demonstrate that swimming is the gateway to a variety of enjoyable aquatic-based activities. However in order to achieve tangible outputs in the long term, a commitment to mainstreaming these sessions is required at facility level throughout the year, rather than just usage during school holiday periods for 'fun splash sessions'.

Invitation days

Format

In Suffolk the Everyday Swim project led to the delivery of a series of Open Days designed to showcase the aquatic opportunities available locally. These Open Days offered a chance for the 45+ age group to visit a local facility and try out an activity as part of a free ‘taster’ session. These sessions provided a welcoming environment with no pressure to commit to
further involvement or membership - a ‘no strings attached’ approach. The day was organised to include refreshments, a chat with the pool provider, a tour of facilities, participation in a water based activity (or the opportunity to watch if preferred), lunch and a prize draw.

When the Good Practice Centre in Suffolk was launched, the Open Day concept was highlighted as an intervention that would be focused upon for the final year of delivery. The aim was to develop the Open Day programme and to “industrialise” its delivery by requesting that each pool operator ran at least three open days per year using a similar format (“tea/coffee/tour/information/free swimming”) aimed at targeting different types of groups. The work plan aspiration was for 20 Open Days to take place attracting a minimum of 300 participants. The ‘Open Day’ format that had been piloted early on in *Everyday Swim* was retained, however to reflect the recruitment method utilised for the marketing they were re-branded as ‘Invitation Days’. In total seven Invitation Days took place at four different pool sites. These included targeting the original 45+ age group (particularly over 60s), but also taking a focus on targeting overweight women (through slimming clubs) and those with young children, plus disabled people, with outreach work undertaken at the following venues: mother and baby groups, Sure Start, resource centres, children’s centres and Slimming World groups.

The key success factors from the initial programme of Open Days were identified by the coordinators and utilised as good practice for structuring the development of these interventions. These success factors included:

- Open Days being tailored to suit the facility needs and specific audience;
- Outreach work with local established community groups; and
- Reminder telephone calls prior to the event to maximise attendance.

The success of the Open Day at Bury Leisure Centre (10 out of 25 attendees were non-swimmers, 4 of these continued to swim on a regular basis and 64% of attendees were still coming to the leisure centre six months after the open day) could be attributed to:

- A well organised and appropriate format for the day;
- The attitude, enthusiasm and sensitivity of those involved in running the day;
- The quality of the facilities being shown;
- The enjoyment of getting into water and having a structured class; and
- Personal touches, such as phone calls to all attendees and people to talk to on the day.

**Marketing**

Marketing was designed to provide a personal touch in order to attract non-swimmers and infrequent swimmers. At the project onset various different marketing methods were trialled, including adverts in local newspapers, posters, leaflet drops, advertising at local libraries and advertising within the leisure facility itself. However research identified that outreach work within local communities had the biggest impact. Those who agreed to attend received a follow-up phone call a few days before the event which was considered to be effective. The *Everyday Swim* coordinator visited community groups, personally inviting them to the Open-Days. This proved the most successful means of marketing the events as people were happier
to come along with a familiar group of people and where they had already met a key organiser.

*Evaluation*

A questionnaire was designed to assess the impact of marketing efforts, how satisfied customers were with their visits to centres, swimming participation levels and how respondents could be helped to take up swimming on a more regular basis. The exact number of attendances across the seven open days is unknown however estimated attendance figures (approximately 100 participants) represent around one third of the original target. In total 23 attendees completed the participant questionnaire and the evaluation findings from these invitation days are summarised below.

The outreach method of marketing proved successful with over 50% of participants finding out about the days through somebody visiting a group that they attended. The majority of the attendees (83%) were female and from the 25-29 and 45-59 age groups. Respondents were asked whether they were planning to sign up for a course of six free swim lessons and 22% responded positively. However only one person expressed that their main reason for coming to the sessions was to ‘learn to swim’. In total 40% of attendees were non-swimmers (they had not been swimming for at least the last year), with a further 35% only swimming infrequently. Approximately one quarter of participants were unable to swim at all, with approximately half of all respondents keen to improve their swimming confidence.

Satisfaction levels across all aspects of each event were consistently high, with over 75% 'very satisfied'.

*Emergent learning and good practice*

The feedback from the Invitation Days is highly positive and the venues and personnel involved succeeded in providing a welcoming environment and positive experience for those who attended. However the process of arranging the logistics for Invitation Days, and the in-person marketing and promotions required, are such that the use of Invitation Days to stimulate wide scale increases in participation is unlikely to yield significant results. The format does play a role in attracting hard to reach groups however somebody to drive the interventions on the ground is required. Anecdotal feedback found that once the responsibility to contact local community groups was handed over to leisure centre staff, some were reluctant to make the necessary calls, which in turn points to a staff development issue. Some staff members felt that they were ‘cold-calling’ or viewed as selling something to community groups and felt uncomfortable with this role. The Good Practice Centre Invitation Days highlighted that having a pro-active and enthusiastic person involved in driving interventions of this type is key to their success – without this there is no built in sustainability or local ownership to continue delivering / developing the sessions. The levels of commitment and enthusiasm demonstrated by project leads have a major influence on their success. The following ‘top tips’ also emerged from running invitation days:

- Offer free activity sessions during the open day session or following it.
- Promote the range of activities available and provide leaflets and timetables.
- Offer a swim or aqua aerobics session with the opportunity to talk to the teacher afterwards about learning to swim / confidence building / improver lessons / stroke development or other opportunities.
• Offer a prize draw to win something at every open day e.g. goggles, voucher for cafeteria, voucher for a swimming costume, free activity for a specified time.

• Remember the following: it doesn’t have to last all day; it is a good opportunity to get staff more interactive with potential customers and thinking more creatively; it can be inexpensive; it is good public service and a promotional opportunity; you should experiment with ‘what works’ and ‘what does not’ for your centre; secondary spending may improve; and, your customers may return with other friends or family.

3.9. Good Practice Centres - Summary of issues and achievements

Key achievements of the two local projects

• Ensuring key individuals were in place from the start of Everyday Swim and, where possible, keeping those people in place for the duration of the project. This allows continuity in delivery as key individuals can take ownership of the project and also have the drive (and the power within the organisation) to make things happen. This was a particular area of strength in Islington.

• A contract / authority wide focus where the steering group and operating model has control over the project provides a strong base from which to deliver changes (for example, Aquaterra had control over all four pools). This allows change to be implemented using existing structures where relationships and partnerships are already active.

• In Islington, the coordinator was "not afraid to spend the money" in a way that meant investment in testing and developing products for the programme and promotions to support them were completed. This was complemented by a number of evaluations and reviews taking place to look at where improvements were needed and also to make them sustainable.

• One potential area of 'conflict' in any pool is when programme revamps take place due to the potential to disrupt or upset regular customers. Following assessments of the programmes locally, a number of new ideas were developed. In order to reduce potential conflict the coordinators developed ways to strategically use pool space (e.g. splitting up the pool), create alternative or additional courses for anyone displaced and, where possible, keeping core income generating slots. The integration into the programme of adult swimming lessons is a good example where Islington used programme time that was either unused or under utilised and allowed new customers the opportunity to swim.

• 'Creative marketing beyond the four walls' was a prominent part of the Everyday Swim project. In Islington, 'Motivation' magazine, directions to pools on billboards, street surveys and revised programmes were all examples of marketing to attract new customers. In Suffolk, the development of 'Invitation Days' in three of the seven Suffolk districts allowed new customers to access facilities. Having the people responsible for marketing involved on the steering group from the outset with the ability to coordinate a consistent message from a central base is an area of strength.

• Making effective use of Monitoring & Evaluation during the project to evaluate products which then allows improvements and pathways to be developed is a key
element for sustaining new products / programmes. For example, the adult swimming lessons in Islington saw the development of a series of surveys which helped to inform the design and implementation of the larger programme.

- The Pool Operators' Group meetings in Suffolk have brought together operators from a wide geographical base and allowed sharing of good practice and networking opportunities to occur.

- Provision of additional resources for the ASA to support wider swimming development work has been published. This has included: case studies and seminars including; top tips for teaching adults; running aqua health clubs; setting up and running a Pool Operators' Group. Work on producing toolkits / help to support continued professional development are also a lasting legacy of *Everyday Swim*.

- Activity in the different quadrants of the Ansoff matrix has been tested during *Everyday Swim* and *Good Practice Centres*. For example in Suffolk, Liquid Trailers is a good example of product development; Invitation Days is a possible approach to market development; and working with health sector partners represents efforts to diversify. These points highlight the need to take a portfolio approach to stimulate the demand for swimming and conceptually this approach has important implications both locally and nationally.

- Aqua Health Clubs were established and successfully delivered in six of the seven Suffolk districts, engaging with traditionally hard to reach local people.
Issues

Timescales and staffing issues

- The awarding of the additional year of *Good Practice Centres* was announced in mid-March 2009 which saw a big difference between the two projects in terms of momentum. Although it is not always possible to have funding decisions made well in advance of project extensions, they have an impact on delivery and planning. The value of the Islington project coordinator had been recognised and the post was to be mainstreamed after the completion of the second year of *Everyday Swim* in a business development capacity. This allowed momentum and planning to be continuous and there were no breaks in delivery. By contrast, the Suffolk coordinators reported that the decision in March resulted in some loss in momentum for the project. Initially there were short planning horizons, as many interventions were scheduled to come to a close at the end of March 2009. However the additional year of *Everyday Swim* funding did allow the coordinators to continue to work towards driving existing and new interventions forwards for a one year period. The Suffolk coordinators reported a slow start to the additional year in terms of defining and creating a clear plan for GPC work – this process did not commence until May 2009.

- Between August 2009 and late October the co-ordinators reported that their time was completely taken up by national dissemination (primarily the organisation and delivery of a series of the five national Good Practice seminars). This both limited the amount of local work carried out and caused some momentum to be lost in terms of the establishment and planning of initiatives for the spring. This didn't have a negative effect in Islington however, due to the established strength of the operating model.

- In Suffolk one coordinator was on maternity leave for last three months of GPC year. The work of the second coordinator was up-scaled to four days per week for this remaining period.

- Key staff changes in Suffolk (including new pool managers) had an impact on the speed and extent of delivery as relationships had to be developed again from scratch and there was a delay in confirming appointments and getting individuals into posts.

Facilities/District

- Pool closures in both local areas due to a number of operational issues and refurbishments had an impact on the ability to deliver programmes during some parts of the year.

- The introduction of *Free Swimming* was reported by the coordinators to be preoccupying pool operators and swimming development coordinators; therefore Good Practice Centre initiative was viewed as a lower priority. The introduction of free swimming lessons also had an impact on pool programming and caused some initiatives that were price-related (e.g. the '£10 swim') to be stopped.
4. EVERYDAY SWIM NATIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMME

4.1. National 'Good Practice' seminars

The Everyday Swim project differed from similar sports development initiatives by being committed to sharing the learning identified from the project with the wider industry on an ongoing basis. In October 2009, a series of Everyday Swim Good Practice Seminars were delivered across the country aimed at those responsible for the planning, delivery and operational side of activities in swimming pools. The seminars were free to attend and took place at the following five locations:

- 1st October Hilton Deansgate, Manchester
- 6th October Mercure Holland House Hotel & Spa, Bristol
- 7th October London Strand Palace Hotel, London
- 14th October The Copthorne Hotel, Newcastle
- 20th October The Studio, Birmingham

The purpose of the seminars was to provide delegates with the opportunity to hear first hand about Everyday Swim and good practice blueprint identified across the project. The seminars were full day events and the programme is listed below.

- An address by Duncan Goodhew MBE, Everyday Swim ambassador
- Everyday Swim successes (delivered by SIRC)
- Three focussed workshops on the blueprint themes, namely:
  - Culture Change;
  - Product Development and Enhancement (also known as Structured Sessions); and
  - Creative Marketing.
- Lessons learnt / Moving forward (delivered by SIRC)
- Evaluation exercise (conducted by SIRC)

Overall, more than 350 delegates from organisations including local authorities, leisure providers, and county sports partnerships attended the seminars. Each delegate also received a resource pack which included a copy of the Everyday Swim DVD, a selection of cases studies, contact details for the coordinators and a USB stick with pre-saved Everyday Swim resources on it.

SIRC was involved in both the planning and delivery of the seminars as well as the evaluation of delegate experiences of the day. At least two members of SIRC staff were present at each venue. A ten minute evaluation exercise was conducted by SIRC using our ‘who wants to be a millionaire’ style Qwizdom equipment, an interactive system which uses hand held devices to submit answers. A total of 243 responses were achieved using Qwizdom across the five seminars. In addition, graffiti boards were used to record any specific comments by the delegates.

The delegate responses are presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 and the headline findings from the seminar evaluation are outlined below.
Awareness & motivations

- Around 73% of delegates had found out about the seminar from either 'Everyday Swim' (44%) or the 'ASA' (29%). For the majority of delegates (57%), the main reason for attending the seminar was to find out about the achievements of the Everyday Swim project. Around one in four people reported that they were mainly present to attend one of the themed workshops, whereas around 17% cited 'networking' as their main reason for attendance.

Perceptions of the programme

- 'Workshops' (38%) and 'gaining practical advice to support delivery' (27%) were the two aspects of the seminar programme that delegates found most useful. Across the five seminars, the 'Product Development and Enhancement' workshop was generally regarded by delegates as the session that they learnt the most from. Some related comments by delegates are presented below.

What has been the best thing about today's event?

- "Examples of real success in Islington."
- "Islington pricing & marketing structure."
- "Islington sharing of best practice for adult lessons."
- "Practical implications of talks i.e. they are what good operators want to know."
- "This has been a fantastic opportunity to network and discover opportunities for product development."

- Overall, 75% of delegates felt that their expectations of the seminar were either 'fully' or 'mostly' met. It is also encouraging that 88% of delegates suggested that they would recommend future events similar to the Everyday Swim Good Practice Seminars to colleagues.

Future events

- Delegates expressed an interest in accessing different types of support including 'further conferences / seminars' (22%), and 'informal small networking events' (17%). In response to this request, delegates were invited to take part in an online survey designed by SIRC following the seminars to identify what people would like to see from Everyday Swim and shape the communication of good practice from the project. The key points of note are as follows:
  - A total of 135 delegates responded to the online survey and 100% said that they would attend a future event.
  - London was the most popular location for staging future events, followed by West Midlands and the South East region. The first half of March was the preferred time for attending such events.
  - Delegates identified a range of topics under the 'marketing', 'structured sessions' and 'culture change' themes that they would be interested in hearing more about (see Table 4.3).
  - In addition to the location, timing and content of future events, delegates also advised on the format and delivery of such events (see Table 4.4).
Impact on swimming delivery

- The vast majority (82%) of delegates reported that based on the learning from the Good Practice Seminars at least 'some changes are likely' to their swimming delivery; of these, 18% said that 'many things will change' and according to 8% 'substantial changes will happen'. This is an extremely positive finding and is a testament to the genuinely useful advice that was offered, which delegates felt they could take away and implement. Some related delegate comments are presented below.

How will you put the information / learning from today into practice?

"Go back to manager to discuss incentives."

"Review and audit pool programming & marketing plans."

"Review marketing - 'outside four walls' was spot on."

"Review programmes and implement early."

"To discuss with management and frontline staff on future improvements, especially adult swimming."

Although the national seminars proved to be very successful in communicating the Everyday Swim messages to people charged with swimming delivery across the country, these were part of a wider programme of learning developed by the ASA to disseminate the good practice identified across the project. For example, delegates at the five seminars were advised of email and phone support available to them and this was also promoted via the Everyday Swim website. In addition, those interested were given the opportunity to arrange a free of charge ‘visitor day’ to the Islington and Suffolk Good Practice Centres. SIRC maintained a log of all the email / phone enquiries for advice and requests for site visits. In practice four enquiries were made, each of which were dealt with over the phone by the relevant coordinator.

The Everyday Swim website has remained a valuable source of information and provides access to a selection of resources including formal monitoring and evaluation reports, pilot case studies, practical guides and some example marketing materials used through the Everyday Swim pilot areas. In April / May 2009, more than 2,300 new visitors accessed the Everyday Swim website, with many of these individuals accessing the Everyday Swim DVD and other learning resources.

The 10 minute DVD shows real-life successes on how to get more people swimming, giving useful tips for what pool providers, local authorities and other local partners need to do to ensure people have a great experience in their local pool. Comments received about the DVD include that it is ‘inspiring and very well produced’ and ‘pitched perfectly’ for managers and staff. Moreover, the free monthly e-publication Everyday Swim News has been providing registered users with regular updates of the work being undertaken in Islington and Suffolk and the good practice emerging from the project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did you hear about this event?</th>
<th>Manchester (n=58)</th>
<th>Bristol (n=40)</th>
<th>London (n=46)</th>
<th>Newcastle (n=43)</th>
<th>Birmingham (n=56)</th>
<th>Overall (n=243)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyday Swim</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASA</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tell us your main reason for attending?</th>
<th>Manchester (n=58)</th>
<th>Bristol (n=40)</th>
<th>London (n=46)</th>
<th>Newcastle (n=43)</th>
<th>Birmingham (n=56)</th>
<th>Overall (n=243)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To find out about Everyday Swim achievements</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What was the most useful aspect of today's event?</th>
<th>Manchester (n=58)</th>
<th>Bristol (n=40)</th>
<th>London (n=46)</th>
<th>Newcastle (n=43)</th>
<th>Birmingham (n=56)</th>
<th>Overall (n=243)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining practical advice to support delivery</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which session did you learn the most from?</th>
<th>Manchester (n=58)</th>
<th>Bristol (n=40)</th>
<th>London (n=46)</th>
<th>Newcastle (n=43)</th>
<th>Birmingham (n=56)</th>
<th>Overall (n=243)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product Development &amp; Enhancement Workshop</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Marketing Workshop</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Achievements (Presentation)</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Change Workshop</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving Forward (Presentation)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Subtotals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
Table 4.2: GPC Seminars Qwizdom Results - 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>Manchester (n=58)</th>
<th>Bristol (n=40)</th>
<th>London (n=46)</th>
<th>Newcastle (n=43)</th>
<th>Birmingham (n=56)</th>
<th>Overall (n=243)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which of the following would you be most interested in accessing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further conferences / seminars</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site visits</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local learning days</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online resources</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal small networking events</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email / phone support</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent can you implement the learning from today to change your swimming delivery?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantial changes will happen</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many things will change</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some changes are likely</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited changes will happen</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing will change</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you recommend similar events to colleagues in the future?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>88.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent were your expectations of today’s event met?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully met</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly met</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some were met</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few were met</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None were met</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Subtotals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
### Table 4.3: Post-seminar online survey - Topics of interest for future events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smaller scale practical ideas</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using vouchers / incentives</td>
<td>65.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launching projects</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close working between marketing and swimming teams</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branding and promotional material</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Marketing</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday Swim Champions</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structured Sessions</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing adult swimming lessons and good practice tips</td>
<td>84.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme development (e.g. Liquid Swim, Indoor Surfing, Mini Polo etc.)</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing young people's swimming lessons and good practice tips</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Swimming</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Liquid Trailer', using fun equipment to engage young people</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open days</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture Change</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bring the gym culture to the pool</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retaining your customers</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalising the role of swim teachers</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with outreach groups</td>
<td>65.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-programming your pool</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upskilling your workforce</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swim buddies</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool Operators' Group</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing policies</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Multiple responses permitted
Table 4.4: Post-seminar online survey - Recommended format and delivery of future events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which of the following types of networking would interest you?</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small group interactive workshops</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitated round table discussions</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming as a group</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q&amp;A sessions</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking after seminars</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details of delegates</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online networking / discussion forum</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchtime networking</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would your preferred format be?</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full day with multiple themes (similar to the previous seminar)</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full day on two themes (split into morning &amp; afternoon)</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Day (Morning)</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Day (Afternoon)</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full day on one theme</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you like information to be presented?</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mix of presentations &amp; interaction</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All presentations</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All interactive sessions</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who would you like to deliver the sessions?</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local deliverers with operational knowledge</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers who can provide an overview of successes</td>
<td>72.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High profile key note speakers</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would any of the following be useful parts of the day?</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case studies to take away</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small discussion groups</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured / facilitated networking sessions</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q&amp;A Sessions</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Multiple responses permitted.
4.2. Embedding of *Everyday Swim* learning at national level

Based on the monitoring and evaluation exercise conducted by SIRC on behalf of the ASA for the eight *Everyday Swim* pilot projects, including the two areas that were subsequently recognised as *Good Practice Centres* (Islington and Suffolk), three broad themes were identified as being key to driving forward the delivery of swimming and increasing participation in the sport; namely: 'Structured Sessions', 'Creative Marketing' and 'Culture Change'. In this section of the report we consider how the emerging themes have been addressed and turned into practical solutions for pools nationally in order to assess the wider impacts that may be attributed to *Everyday Swim* and the *Good Practice Centres*.

*Structured Sessions*

This theme focuses on adding value to people's swimming experience via the input and supervision of sessions by suitably qualified staff. Perhaps the most significant type of structured session is teaching non-swimmers how to swim, or rebuilding the water confidence of those people who have not been swimming for a number of years. In so doing, some of the latent demand identified in national surveys such as Active People can be met, as people become better equipped to access and enjoy the broad portfolio of aquatic activities that are available. The ASA has embraced this recommendation and led the delivery of structured 'Learn to Swim' lessons across the country as part of the *Free Swimming* programme.

The DCMS and the ASA adopted an aspirational target to deliver access lessons to some 100,000 people during the lifetime of *Free Swimming*. Had this been achieved, it would have been one of the most successful sports development initiatives ever delivered in England. However, as a further point of context, the number of adults in England who are unable to swim is around four million. Swimming has the potential to make a sizeable contribution to Sport England's 'one million' indicator as well as broader participation indicators such as KPI 1 and NI 8. However, converting the latent demand of non-swimmers into expressed demand requires a much more sophisticated and holistic approach than removing the unsubstantiated barrier of cost.

County Swimming Coordinators are also working with partners to encourage pools to offer a much wider variety of activities, both to attract new swimmers and develop pathways for existing participants. A series of templates have been developed for the County Swimming Coordinators to effectively deliver structured sessions to target groups nationwide, including: 'SwimFit'; 'Step-into-Masters'; 'Women’s Networks'; and, 'Youth Aquatics Groups'.

*Creative Marketing*

One of the key messages emerging from *Everyday Swim* was to market and promote swimming in more creative ways and beyond the four walls of facilities in order to attract new participants. The British Gas sponsorship deal, which commenced in March 2009, has enabled this in two major ways: first, by the investment of British Gas into a number of advertising campaigns (using TV, press, cinema and digital) promoting swimming through their customer propositions ‘Free Family Swim’ and ‘3 Free Swims’; and second, by the secondment of a British Gas Marketing Manager into the ASA for 12 months to support with their strategic marketing development.
The most successful marketing bases its activity on clear identification of and focus on the consumer groups you want to target. At the beginning of 2010 the ASA used a variety of qualitative and quantitative sources to pinpoint the types of people who have a particularly high propensity to swim, and used the Sport England sporting segmentation guidelines to identify: 'Jackie & Alison' (30-45 year old mums); 'Brenda & Elaine' (46-59 older working ladies); and, 'Tim & Helena' (25-35 sporty professionals). In early to mid 2010, a marketing plan was developed to specifically target these three segments. The learning from *Everyday Swim* generally and the *Good Practice Centres* in particular was useful in the activity development of this plan. For example, the 'Motivation' magazine that had proved to be so successful in Islington was used as a template to develop 'Jump In', aimed at 'Jackie & Alison' and budgeted for a door-drop of 1.8 million households. On the whole, the *Everyday Swim / Good Practice Centres* experience has had influence on the activity thinking behind the ASA's recent marketing plan. However, due to the recent cancellation of the *Free Swimming* programme the funding required to fully implement the plan was withdrawn.

Aside from the segmentation based plan, County Swimming Coordinators have also been supported in their work talking with pool operators and partners about ways to reach out to new swimmers. A 'Let’s Get England Swimming!' leaflet full of action points for key stakeholders was distributed to pools towards the end of the *Good Practice Centres* year. A second quarterly leaflet, titled 'Structured Sessions', has been introduced and one on the theme of 'Culture Change' is currently being designed.
The development of 'Splashpath', a free swimming application for the web and mobile phone funded by Channel 4’s Investment for the Public fund (4IP), has enabled leisure operators to market swimming opportunities via new information technology to a much wider audience. By providing people with easy access to real-time information such as the location of pools, timetables and prices, this innovative marketing strategy is expected to address the latent demand for swimming and increase participation and revenue, as illustrated by the following quotes:

"Leisure Connection is really excited to be involved with Splashpath and see this as a fantastic tool to help drive customers into our swimming pools."

Kate McKnight, National Product Development Manager - Leisure Connection

"Splashpath hits two of our key agendas with one great idea. The timetabling tool enables us to provide up to date information to our current and potential new users on multiple platforms and websites, removing the need for duplication. Put access to this information in one place, add mapping and tools to record usage and communication with other users and Splashpath will assist our push to increase swimming participation."

Andrew Clark, Swimming Development Manager - Greenwich Leisure Limited

Good practice from the Everyday Swim pilot areas has also been embedded into the national Swim4Life campaign. The ASA is a key partner for Swim4Life, which is part of the wider Department of Health Change4Life campaign, and the learning from Everyday Swim has been used in the development of the online toolkits and DVD to support pool providers and local supporters with advice and 'top tips' for getting families to access the pool.

Culture Change

Everyday Swim confirmed that there is no ‘magic bullet’ for increasing participation in swimming, and that it is actually a question of doing 100 things 1% better rather than one thing 100% better. Specific areas of culture change identified during the Good Practice Centres' year are outlined below:

- Research conducted by SIRC has shown that there is a strong positive relationship between swimming participation rates (demand) and the availability of pool space (supply). In other words, those areas with more supply of pool space tend to have higher levels of regular participation. Armed with this knowledge, many pools have been ‘unlocking’ valuable pool space - a critical factor in changing pool culture - following an audit of their programming. Moreover, during Year 1 of Free Swimming some £35m of capital funding was allocated by the government to improve facilities and other assets which enhance people's swimming experience.

- The Everyday Swim pilots showcased how a workforce that is fit for purpose can add flexibility to pool programming designed to broaden the base of swimming participation by enabling new markets to be developed. County Swimming Coordinators and their partners are working to introduce more effective programmes to ensure that the workforce is fit for specific purposes. Recommendations to develop 'swimming buddy' schemes and 'Someone like me' local ambassadors have led to the development of CPD training courses including the 'Kellogg’s Champions' and 'Teaching Nervous Adults' courses.
Partnership working has been a key component of Everyday Swim. Based on the learning from the project, the ASA are working in a strategic manner by developing links to national organisations (e.g. YMCA, Age Concern, Children's Centres etc.) in an effort to "industrialise" the good practice across the country.

In order to be effective, monitoring and evaluation must be bolted into the start of any sport development initiative, not bolted on as an afterthought once delivery is underway. Post Everyday Swim, there is a sense that engagement with M&E is becoming much more of an enforced requirement in exchange for funding allocated to swimming development projects.

In the final chapter of the report, we identify what we consider to be the key strategic lessons emerging from the Everyday Swim and Good Practice Centres project.
5. STRATEGIC LESSONS

In this chapter we conclude by presenting five strategic lessons that emerge from *Everyday Swim* and *Good Practice Centres*.

5.1. Market development in swimming is not easy

Since 1987 when the General Household Survey reported that the four weekly participation rate in swimming for adults was 13%, there has been no significant change subsequently with the Active People Surveys of 2005/6 and 2007/8 and 2008/9 showing similar findings (See Figure 2.1). The absolute number of swimmers in England has increased because the population has increased, but in relative (percentage) terms there has been no noticeable change. This finding is not confined solely to swimming and indeed is replicated in many mainstream sports.

After three years of *Everyday Swim*, just one of the pilot local authorities (Islington) achieved a statistically significant increase in swimming participation as measured by the Active People Survey. Islington was one of five authorities out of 354 in England to record such an achievement. At national level, the attempt to 'industrialise' a sports development impact via the *Free Swimming* programme has proven to be unsuccessful.

What we are trying to achieve by increasing swimming participation rates is an increase in the demand for swimming. There are four generic determinants of demand namely: price; income; the price and availability of substitutes; and customers' tastes and preferences. We know from Scotland, Wales and now England that price when used as a device to increase demand tends to have a market penetration effect (existing swimmers swimming more frequently) and not a market development effect (new customers entering the market for swimming). Price on its own is therefore a blunt instrument by which to achieve market development effects in swimming.

In the case of income, personal incomes have been rising since 1987 (and before) and yet participation remains static. Realistically income is not a factor that those charged with making policy interventions can control. *Free Swimming* creates an 'income effect' for those who already swim, that is, they are better off because of the removal of admission charges. It is perhaps not surprising that the observed effect of interventions based on price reductions is for existing swimmers to swim more frequently.

There have never been more competing interests for people's leisure time and leisure expenditure both in the home (television, the internet and gaming etc) and away from the home (cinema, eating / drinking out, and holidays). One of the most commonly cited reasons for wanting to take part in sport but being unable to do so is a lack of time. To tackle this issue, those concerned with sport development should realise where the true competition for new customers lies. It is not a case of 'cannibalising' other sports, because this does not contribute to Sport England's targets. Rather, it is a case of having to win new customers from other leisure pursuits in order to increase the overall pool of people who take part in sport and physical activity. Findings from *Everyday Swim* and *Free Swimming* indicate that the cost of winning one new adult customer for swimming ranges from £435 to £535.

The key generic determinant for sport is customers' personal tastes and preferences. Those with sport development responsibilities should be challenged, and indeed should challenge themselves, with the question 'how does this intervention help to change people's tastes and preferences?' Open Days or Invitation Days are a good example of showcasing the product of swimming such that potential customers might be persuaded to take up the product on
offer. Teaching people how to swim or providing them with the water confidence necessary to enjoy swimming and other aquatic sports is also a good example of how people's tastes and preferences might be altered positively towards swimming.

Finally, there is historical and contemporary evidence that the demand for swimming is linked to the availability of supply. The only significant increases in swimming participation measured in England and Wales occurred between 1976 and 1986 during what was a boom for swimming pool construction following government legislation for sport provision and a major reorganisation of local government.

More recently, bringing together data from Active People (demand) and Active Places (supply) indicates that higher levels of swimming participation are positively correlated with higher levels of supply. This does not necessarily mean a recommendation to build new pools, rather making the optimum use of the facilities that are available including those in the education and private sectors.

5.2. There is no 'magic bullet' to increase swimming participation

If there was a simple 'fix' to increase swimming participation, the chances are it would have been discovered by now and successfully implemented by the private sector. The results of Free Swimming indicate that even the investment of unprecedented amounts of additional funding (£70m per year) into swimming in the run up to hosting the summer Olympic Games does not of itself lead to an increase in participation. This finding should be a salutary lesson to all concerned with increasing participation that simplistic solutions are unlikely to work regardless of the scale on which they are rolled out.

As well as there being no 'magic bullet' it is an over simplification of the evidence to divide the market for swimming into 'swimmers' and 'non-swimmers'. There are some 5.5m regular adult swimmers who swim at least once a month. This market is made up of various segments and includes people such as lane swimmers, parents who swim with their children, and people who choose to engage in low impact non-weight bearing activity - to identify but three segments. Amongst people who do not swim there are also market segments, for example, those who can swim but choose not to; those who would like to swim but are somehow prevented from doing so; those who are unable to swim; and those who are afraid of the water.

As with all successful business growth strategies, it is a basic principle that customers' needs should be identified and understood so that appropriate products can be developed that cater for the intended markets. This type of product development activity should be prefaced with some simple questions to which convincing answers are needed before resources are committed.

- Who is this activity for?
- Why is it being provided in the manner specified?
- What are the mechanisms by which the intervention works?
- How will it alter customers' tastes and preferences positively towards swimming?
- What does success look like?
- How do we monitor and evaluate what we are doing?
5.3. There is a blueprint to drive up swimming participation

The 2009 Everyday Swim Final Report details a blueprint for driving up swimming participation that has been proven to work at local authority level. The blueprint has three broad components which are listed below.

- Culture change
- Structured sessions
- Creative marketing.

None of these three areas are easy to achieve, nor is it possible to be prescriptive about how to implement the blueprint. What we can do is to point to Islington and to identify some essential points about how the blueprint was put into operation.

Culture change

- The goal in Islington was to bring the high standards of customer care and retention from the already successful dry side of the facilities to the pool.
- A whole of authority (four swimming pools) approach was taken.
- Staff buy in to the project was essential at all levels and at all sites.
- There were no 'sacred cows' and by adopting a 'blank piece of paper' approach it was possible to challenge constructively the programme and the notion that 'it's always been done this way before'.

Structured sessions

- The core changes to the swimming offer at Islington were swimming lessons and Liquid Swim. Swimming lessons were key to attracting and retaining new customers (market development), whereas Liquid Swim added value to the swimming experience of existing swimmers and cross over clients from the gym, as well as providing a pathway for new swimmers.
- Free Swimming sessions particularly for young people tend to be 'free splash' with minimal input or added value by staff. It is worth noting that in Wales after six years of running a national free swimming programme it has been found that structured sessions are experiencing growth, whereas 'free splash' sessions have been in decline.

Creative marketing

- Marketing beyond the four walls of facilities has been one of the more innovative features of the Islington approach. From delivering magazines about swimming (Motivation) to every household in the borough to improved signage to facilities, great attention to detail has been paid to letting people who are not regular customers know what is on and where the facilities are.
- The professionalism and commitment of the Everyday Swim coordinator and the on site staff has, in its own way, been a form of positive creative marketing. The ownership and desire to succeed by all concerned, notably in the personal attention given to every recruit to swimming lessons, stands out as an exemplar of good practice for the industry.
As a counterpoint to the notion of a 'magic bullet' we reiterate our point that success will be achieved by doing 100 things 1% better rather than doing one thing 100% better. This will be an unedifying message for people looking for a 'quick fix'.

5.4. Time is of the essence

Similar to the notion that there is no 'magic bullet', history indicates that there is also no 'quick fix'. Sustainable sports development takes time and this is often an ingredient that is in short supply during projects like *Everyday Swim*. It is widely accepted that to make a measurable impact at community level requires at least five years' development work. This view is confirmed by Sport England's own research into Sport Action Zones (SAZs) in 2006 which found that significant increases in participation were achieved in two of the four SAZs subject to monitoring and evaluation. In identifying the key policy implications for Sport England its own Policy and Research team\(^2\) concluded:

> Take a medium to long term view about the length of time this approach will take to generate real impact. Existing Sport Action Zones have been five years in operation.

In the initial two year term of *Everyday Swim* the model adopted tended to be six months or more spent 'capacity building', a year of delivery, and in the final six months or so the coordinators looked to wind down their efforts and seek employment elsewhere. In Suffolk where the programme eventually lasted three years, there was a loss of continuity between the first two years and the third caused by uncertainty over continued funding. Islington thrived because regardless of the decision to fund it for a third year Aquaterra had already decided to continue with what it regarded to have been a successful formula for attracting new customers and improving business performance.

The issue of needing time to make interventions work is not confined to swimming and is evident in a 'tight' definition of sport or looser definitions of sport and physical activity as shown in Table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1: Sport England's progress against targets 2005/6 - 2008/9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Active People 1 2005/6</th>
<th>Active People 2 2007/8</th>
<th>Active People 3 2008/9</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3x30 Sport(^1)</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>+1.1 (7.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI 1 3x30(^2)</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>+0.6 (2.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)At least 3 sessions x 30 minutes, moderate intensity sport per week (all adults)

\(^2\)At least 3 days x 30 minutes, moderate intensity participation (sport and recreational walking and cycling) per week (all adults)

Increases in the percentage of people undertaking sport and active recreation appears to follow a path of evolution rather than revolution. It is overly optimistic to believe that throwing resources at an issue will have immediate and long lasting effects. Swimming is a complex sport with those who seek to increase demand (participation) having little or no control over supply (pool operators). Under these conditions it is inevitable that the pace of change will be slow. However, it should always be borne in mind that swimming has the highest latent demand of any sport in England. Consequently, the challenge facing the industry is to create the conditions whereby this latent demand can be realised. Policy

makers in the industry should adopt a long term and pragmatic approach addressing the needs of customers and potential customers, whilst being wary of the impacts of short term gimmicks and attempts at a quick fix.

5.5. The workforce should be fit for purpose

The sport and leisure industries are predominantly service industries and customers in part equate the value of their experience with the quality of service they receive from staff. This point is very well understood in the fitness industry whereby customer relationship marketing is widely regarded as being a key ingredient by which positive levels of adherence and retention are routinely achieved. Swimming by contrast is a much more anonymous sport in which customer relationship marketing techniques are not particularly well developed except perhaps in structured sessions such as swimming lessons. There is considerable learning for the swimming industry to undertake in order to provide customer service that is on a par with competing products and services within and beyond the sport industry.

*Everyday Swim* coordinators have reported on numerous occasions a lack of skills and flexibility in the swimming workforce. Notable examples include:

- staff being unwilling to work at other sites when coordinators have tried to open up school pools during holiday times;
- staff being unwilling to support *Everyday Swim* sessions and being told 'either you run it yourself or it gets cancelled';
- staff being unwilling to learn the skills required for new products, for example 'Swim-a-Song';
- staff being unwilling to engage in business development activity such as recruiting potential customers for Open Days / Invitation Days;
- managers being unable to staff 'women only' sessions with female staff;
- frontline staff portraying themselves as enforcers of archaic rules rather than as key components of a positive swimming experience; and
- an over reliance on casual / session tutors who have the requisite skills to deliver certain sessions and who supply them on a sub-contractor basis rather than the skills being readily available within the normal staff complement.

The issue of workforce development has been reported on in greater depth following the ASA's commission of Hays Recruitment to advise on the subject. There appears to be agreement with our view that staff working in the swimming industry should have a much more structured career path. For those who work in the industry, there is an important lesson from the *Everyday Swim* pilot in Suffolk, namely: it is not only what you do that is important but also the manner in which you do it. It is quite possible for two members of staff to do exactly the same thing and to achieve totally different results. The difference between success and failure is often no more than: personal motivation; buy in to what you have been asked to do; and basic social skills.

Workforce development is a key component of our 'culture change' section of the blueprint to drive up swimming participation. Regardless of how good a marketing campaign is, or how impressive a new facility is, sustainable success depends crucially on the quality of the interactions between staff and customers. This point is particularly pertinent for customers especially those who are unable to swim or who lack confidence in and around water. There is much to learn in this regard from the fitness industry where new customers are highly
prized. The swimming industry by contrast often seems resistant to change for fear of upsetting 'the regulars'.

5.6. Moving forward

*Everyday Swim* and *Free Swimming* have both been ambitious attempts to drive up participation in England's most popular sport. The former ended on 31st March 2010 and the latter is due to end on 31st July 2010 (although local authorities can continue with *Free Swimming* should they chose to fund it themselves). The results of the two schemes are mixed. In *Everyday Swim* the pilot authorities countered the national trend by achieving a +0.1 percentage point increase against a national trend of a -0.6 percentage point decrease. The London Borough of Islington achieved a statistically significant increase in swimming participation and was one of only five out of 354 authorities in England to achieve such an increase. Islington showed good all round adoption of the components of the *Everyday Swim* blueprint which was implemented on a consistent authority-wide basis by a well motivated team of staff who delivered the scheme.

*Free Swimming* whilst criticised for not delivering value for money did actually deliver 22,971 new swimmers aged 60+, or around 90 new swimmers per participating authority. Furthermore, it also delivered 114,068 new swimmers aged under 16, which equates to around 580 per participating authority. The cost of the programme in its first year was £32m. If this type of activity which was rolled out on an industrial scale does not represent good value for money, it is unlikely that the level of additional resource invested will be available to swimming in the foreseeable future.

The future growth of swimming participation will have to be achieved organically rather than by trying to buy it. In this respect both *Everyday Swim* and *Free Swimming* have been interesting experiments in attempted market development for the industry. The method by which swimming participation will grow in the future, is the application of the *Everyday Swim* blueprint principles in a context sensitive manner by teams of staff who are motivated to succeed.

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