



# RISE. TOGETHER

2021 - 2031

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# FOREWORD

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**RISE HAS CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY OVER THE LAST YEAR. FORMED OUT OF NORTHUMBERLAND SPORT AND TYNE & WEAR SPORT, WE HAVE ADAPTED OUR POSITION TO REFLECT LOCAL NEED AND ARE NOW PROUD TO ACT AS A STRATEGIC AGENCY WITHIN THE REGIONAL LANDSCAPE, COMMITTED TO USING THE POWER OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE COMMUNITIES THAT NEED IT THE MOST IN NORTHUMBERLAND AND TYNE & WEAR.**

We recognise that the world is complex: that is, people are complex, the issues we care about are complex, and the systems that respond to these issues are also complex. How we respond to that complexity over the next 10 years is fundamental to this strategy, and so to help us in our response, we will take a systems approach, recognising that outcomes are produced by whole systems, not individual organisations<sup>1</sup>. Playing this approach out through the priorities and principles in this strategy over the next 10 years will not be a straightforward task, but we know that improving the quality of life for our communities using the power of physical activity, is not a straightforward task, and so we need to work in a different way.

In developing this strategy for the next 10 years, we are setting the road map for the organisation, to help us to continue to strategise as we move through complexity, but be clear on where we

want to get to. We will remain strong in our vision but flexible in the detail about how we might get there; our shorter-term Implementation Plans will guide us in more delivery-focused cycles, the first being 2021-2023.

We thank all those who have been involved in the Rise Together development, not least our team, our Board, local partners, colleagues at both Sport England and the Active Partnerships Network, and the Revaluation Team, who have helped us to think about value in a different way. Alongside supporting the delivery of the Sport England strategy “Uniting The Movement”, we are confident that this new strategy positions us well to tackle the big priorities identified and make a difference to the communities in our region who need it the most.



*Simon Gordon*  
**Simon Gordon**  
Chair



*Clare Morley*  
**Clare Morley**  
Chief Executive  
Officer



# STATISTICS FOR OUR REGION

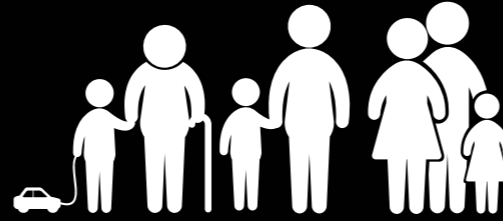
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**Population of Northumberland and Tyne & Wear:**

**1,463,903**



## POPULATION BREAKDOWN

Age Group	Population
0 - 14	16.4%
15 - 29	19.3%
30 - 44	18.1%
45 - 59	20.1%
60 - 74	17.3%
75+	8.9%

Percentage of households without access to a car or van **33.5%**  
(England 25.8%)



**28.0%**  
(England 25.5%)

Percentage of **adults who are inactive**  
(less than 30mins of physical activity per week)

**49.4%**  
(England 44.9%)

Percentage of **children and young people who are active**  
(average of 60mins of physical activity per day)

## Healthy Life expectancy (years):



NE Males

**59.4**

(England 62.9)



NE Females

**59.7**

(England 63.3)

**168** Local Super Output Areas in Northumberland and Tyne & Wear fall within the **most deprived 10%** in the country.

All figures as at 31 March 2021.

Icons created by Freepik



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Prevalence of common mental health disorders in 16+ year olds

**35%**  
of children in the North East live in relative poverty

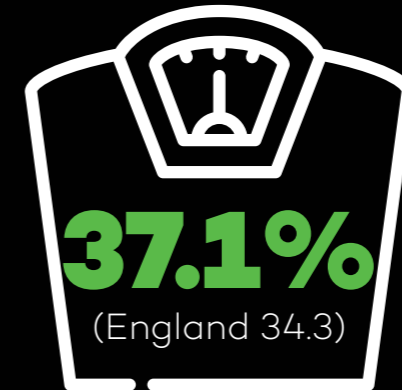
**6.3%**  
**Unemployed**  
(England 4.4%)

**407**  
2018/19

Number of **first-time entrances to the Youth Justice System**

**9.1%**  
(England 7.6%)

Children and young people **attaining no qualifications**



Children in year 6 classed as overweight or obese

Number of **fast food outlets** per 100,000 population

**120.8**  
(England 90.8)



**20.7%**  
**Limiting health problem or disability**  
(England 17.6%)



# VISION. PURPOSE. MISSION.

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## VISION

Our vision sets the context for partnership working in our region.

**To create a higher quality of life for communities that need it the most in Northumberland and Tyne & Wear.**



## PURPOSE

Our purpose shows how, by unlocking the power of physical activity and effecting system change, we can achieve the vision.

**We are here to help our partners to unlock the power of physical activity and to collectively effect long-term system change in order to positively impact more lives across Northumberland and Tyne & Wear.**



## MISSION

Our mission sets out what will be different as a result of our work. It shows what Rise is accountable for.

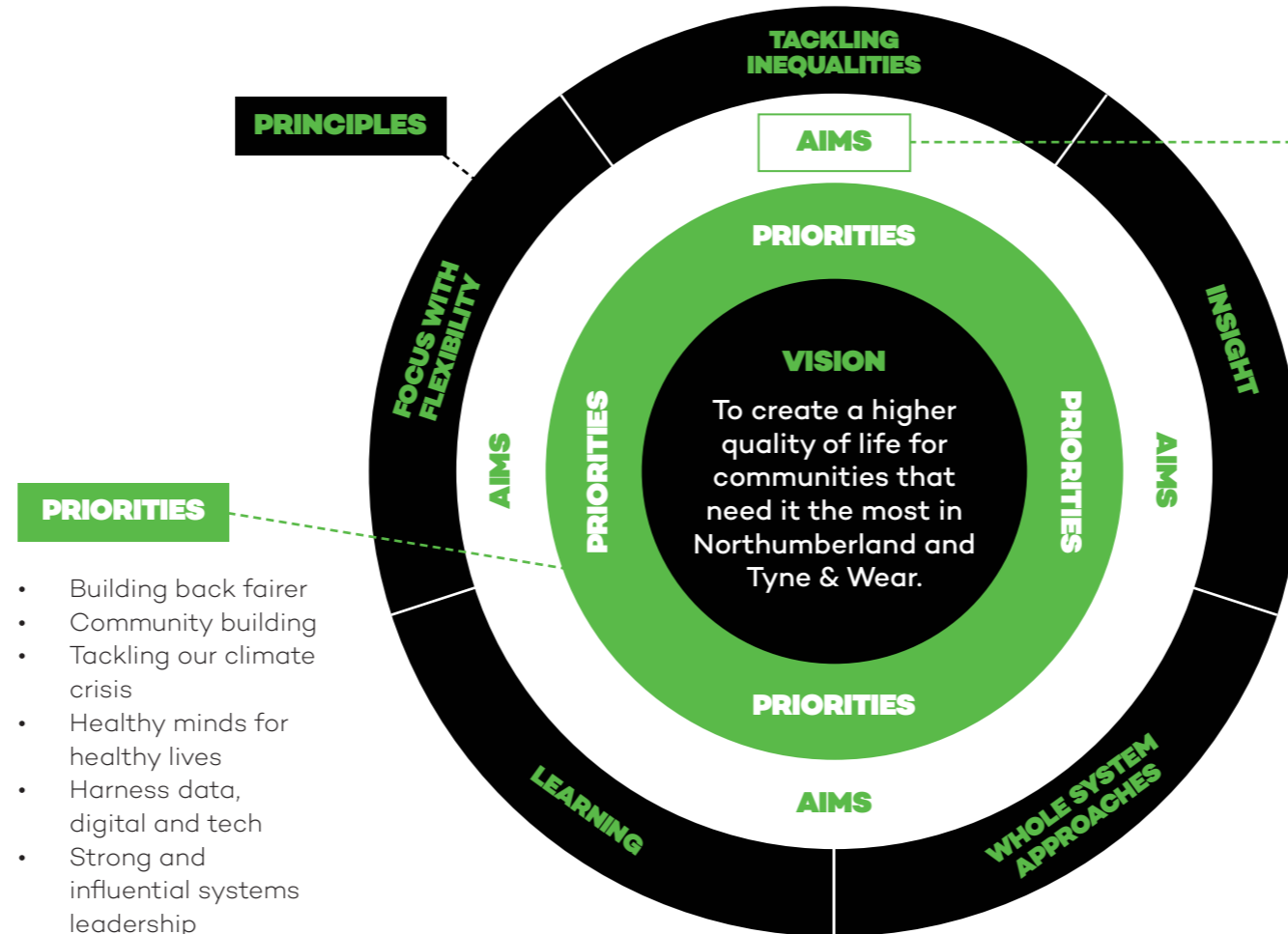
**To enable our system partners to see things differently, work smarter and maximise their results using physical activity.**



# VISUALISING OUR STRATEGY

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## PRIORITIES

- Building back fairer
- Community building
- Tackling our climate crisis
- Healthy minds for healthy lives
- Harness data, digital and tech
- Strong and influential systems leadership

- 1** A local system that advocates for physical activity as a central feature of policy and practice.
- 2** Young people aged 0-25 having the best life chances through an active start in life, regardless of their social or demographic background.
- 3** Physical activity frequently used as a proven intervention tool across numerous sectors (e.g. community safety, health, transport, education and skills).
- 4** Active ageing as a social norm for all older adults, regardless of their social or demographic background.
- 5** Active and sustainable environments and communities existing across the region through active design and infrastructure.
- 6** An embedded range of 'best in class' and accessible digital resources that support physical activity utilisation across services that help communities to be active in ways that work for them.
- 7** Physical inactivity data and insight being used by partners across the system to inform service design, delivery and prioritisation.
- 8** People connected together through physical activity and sport and championing its role in improving their neighbourhood, group or community.
- 9** A thriving community of organisations delivering physical activity and sport opportunities in a safe and sustainable way.
- 10** Rise as a valued, strong and sustainable charity within the system.
- 11** A reduction in health inequalities across the region.
- 12** An increase in both active and fairly active levels across the region, together with an increase in the perceived capability and perceived opportunity to take part in sport and physical activity across all demographic groups.





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## WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO RISE

Over the next 10 years, we have identified that we need to focus the bulk of our attention on the following six priorities. This is not at the exclusion of all other areas, but these themes came through strongly in all our conversations about what Rise should be focussed on as an organisation in order to deliver on our mission and purpose, and work towards achieving our vision.

Our priorities are detailed on the following pages.



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## BUILDING BACK FAIRER

### Using physical activity to support communities to move through and past the Covid-19 pandemic and emerge stronger and more resilient.

Whilst this is not a Covid-19-specific strategy, it cannot be ignored that the pandemic has caused the greatest level of disruption to our society since

World War II. People being restricted in their homes, removed of opportunities to congregate and many facing economic as well as social hardship, means that its legacy will be felt for many years to come. The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities around poverty, education and employment between the North and the rest of England, and loneliness has risen starkly<sup>2</sup>. And the on-going impacts of Long Covid have not even started to be revealed.

It is vital that the social infrastructure that underpins our communities is supported to survive the pandemic and to thrive

once again. Listening to communities and being aware of the challenge of hearing the voices that are seldom heard will be critical to this priority.

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

### Ensuring physical activity supports communities' ability to develop, integrate and thrive.

With increased levels of social isolation and increasingly diverse communities, we need effective ways to support individuals' and communities' abilities to develop, integrate and thrive, supporting them to build on their existing assets and skills, and develop localised solutions.

Physical activity has a strong part to play in bringing people together, helping to create identity and developing individual and collective confidence and skills. It can be a strong force for good and help to make places great through a plethora of means, including creating jobs and volunteering opportunities, tackling anti-social behaviour and connecting neighbourhoods.





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## TACKLING OUR CLIMATE CRISIS

### Physical activity supporting the drive to reduce the rate of global warming and limit climate change.

Climate change is described by the UN as the defining crisis of our time, and carrying on with “business as usual” is not enough to slow it down<sup>3</sup>. Global warming is placing our planet and future generations at risk. Effective climate action from all sectors is needed now to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C and avoid the worst effects of climate change.

There are obvious ways in which use of a more active approach to issues such as travel can

have an impact on CO2 levels and other emissions. In addition, a sedentary lifestyle is often a carbon intensive lifestyle, relying on high levels of carbon use through motorised transport and high levels of leisure behaviours relying on electricity. It is also often associated with being indoors for long periods and the use of lighting and heating.

Supporting individuals to adjust their daily activities with behaviours that are less carbon-intensive and more physically active will have a dual positive contribution to climate change mitigation and non-communicable disease reduction. Moving towards a more climate-responsible approach to sport and physical activity is also vital in our collective efforts to address climate change.

## Young people (13-17) across Northumberland and Tyne & Wear felt that the lockdown had impacted badly on their mental health.

- North East Youth Alliance, 2021

## HEALTHY MINDS FOR HEALTHY LIVES

### The role of physical activity in supporting mental wellbeing, as well as physical wellbeing.

In the modern era, in a world shaken by Covid-19 and filled with internally and externally generated pressures, prioritising the mental wellbeing of ourselves and of those around us has never been so important.

Many North East communities were already seeing higher levels of poor mental wellbeing, even before the Covid-19 pandemic began. It is predicted that these levels will continue to increase as we move further into this decade<sup>4</sup>.

The mental wellbeing benefits of being physically active are often overlooked in favour of the physical wellbeing benefits. The facts are that both our physical and our mental wellbeing can benefit significantly from moving more.

The role of physical activity and sport to maintain good mental wellbeing; its preventative impact, as well as its restorative one, cannot be overlooked.



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## HARNESS DATA, DIGITAL AND TECH

### Ensuring technological developments are utilised to drive the physical activity agenda forward.

The North East's vibrant digital community is one of the most productive and fastest developing in the UK, across industry and public services. The opportunities that exist within the digital transformation journey both locally, nationally and internationally will see us all accessing opportunities and utilising technologies in 10 years' time that have not yet even been invented. How this will impact on opportunities to move more and be more physically active is not yet clear, but we recognise that those who espouse the virtues of physical activity cannot ignore the role that data, digital and technology can play in supporting more active lifestyles.

With 53% of the North East classified as digitally excluded<sup>5</sup>, developments within tech, data and digital communications must be delivered so as not to perpetuate digital exclusion and with it, widening inequalities.



## STRONG AND INFLUENTIAL SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP

### Physical activity has a prominent and sustained place at the strategic table across the systems of our region.

We recognise that we cannot achieve our vision on our own, but can support in the leadership of policy, legislation and system change to ensure physical activity contributes to the creation of a higher quality of life for communities that need it the most in Northumberland and Tyne & Wear.

Rise is in the privileged position of being an organisation with a strategic responsibility for physical activity across the whole of our region, and so we need to ensure that we are well placed to support a systems leadership approach, championing the contribution that physical activity and sport can have across local strategic priorities using appreciative connection and trust-based approaches within local networks and alliances.

As 'system stewards', we recognise our role of taking responsibility for the health of the system and creating the conditions in which others can work effectively.





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Our 10 year strategy is also built around five principles, or approaches, that will guide how we set about our work during this period. These principles act as a guide to how we will work going forward, alongside our values (below), appreciating that how we work in turn leads to what we work on. They are likely to be refined over time depending on prevailing circumstances in order to be adaptive to the systems work within the region. We will be working to ensure that we develop ourselves and our relationships to be able to act in accordance with these principles.

## TACKLING INEQUALITIES

We are humans trying to help humans, and so we will always ask: “How does this piece of work support a reduction in inequality?” We will recommend a proportionate universalism approach to target resources where they are most needed by reason of health or other socio-economic inequalities.

There is a plethora of evidence that there are significant inequalities - health, social, economic and environmental - that have stubbornly existed across our region for many years.

The latest Marmot Review<sup>4</sup> makes an explicit recommendation that the Government develops a National Strategy on Inequalities to reduce widening social, economic, environmental and health inequalities, stressing that this should be a high priority for government policies and public investments.

Placing inequalities at the centre of our work is



therefore fundamental and deploying a proportionate universalism methodology (universalist policies with effort proportionate to need) is a logical manifestation of that approach.

We know that physically inactive populations are often also those which are most marginalised and who suffer the most through inequalities, and so keeping inequalities at the heart of our work will also ensure that we are working with and for our most inactive populations.



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## INSIGHT

**We advocate for the use of intelligence, quantitative and qualitative, as well as shared value, to guide our approaches and those of the wider system in order to ensure the work has the greatest possible impact.**

Data and insight, including evidence of local realities - personal stories and the voices of the community - offer a huge opportunity for positive change in our region and need to be harnessed to ensure that physical activity can play the best possible part it can in supporting work across the system.

Such insight will enable difficult decisions to be made about where to focus resources and how to approach different opportunities and developments.

However, we also recognise that, in a complex system, we don't always know what works before we try it, and so test and learn approaches are still OK!

## WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACHES

**We strongly support whole system approaches and take a person-centred stance, advocating for co-creation techniques as standard and demonstrating collaborative leadership behaviours.**

As recognised in the 'human, learning, systems' approach<sup>1</sup>, social problems are often the end result of many factors interacting, and the world is complex and in constant change. It is therefore important to look at bespoke solutions that recognise that all 'layers' of the system (policy, physical environment, organisations and institutions, social environment and the individual) will have an impact on population level behaviour change and so need to be carefully considered.

Ensuring that the principles that underpin a whole system approach, with people and behaviour change at its heart, are lived out in

policy and practice, is therefore essential.

Whole system approaches are not easily delivered, but coupled with strong systems leadership and drawing on others' expertise, we will be collectively armed to take on these challenges in order to improve the quality of life of our communities.





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## LEARNING

**We celebrate our collective successes and learn from our collective failures, sharing all learning across the system and recognising that in complex systems, we all need to be comfortable with the chaos and that systems change is a long-term endeavour.**

It is vital to invest in constant and collaborative learning because the causes of what we are trying to address are often not clear and

certainly don't respect or follow organisational boundaries.

Asking "what is really going on here", as well as looking at the data, is vital for understanding, and this needs to be undertaken in both an organisational and systems learning context in order to deliver systems change.

Within our emerging learning culture, we recognise that talking about 'failure' is just as important, if not more so, than talking about 'success' as we learn from what goes wrong, as well as from what goes well. We will therefore adopt a positive error culture within Rise and embrace this within our reflective practice, encouraging others to do the same. The learning is the doing in many respects.

## FOCUS WITH FLEXIBILITY

**There are many unknown unknowns in the next 10 years; we are focused on our vision but remain flexible in the detail.**

Recent times have seen an economic, social and health crisis. Figuratively speaking, events of 2020 and early 2021 have turned the world upside down and made planning for the future even more complicated and unpredictable. However, what is clear is that our mission, purpose and vision are strong, robust and have a longevity to them to see us through these next 10 years and perhaps beyond. However, both Rise as an organisation, and the wider system, needs to remain agile to respond to shorter term factors that will doubtless arise over the course of the next 10 years. Remaining strong in the vision but flexible in the detail will enable such factors to be appropriately mitigated and for the journey forwards to continue.

We will be prepared to take a step back, question our own work, ask others for their views, and potentially change tack, if the circumstances require us to do so in order to continue to deliver on our mission and work towards our vision.



# AIMS

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Casting our minds forward to 2031, in 10 years' time, through the implementation of this strategy, we are aiming to see:

**1**

A local system that advocates for physical activity as a central feature of policy and practice.

**2**

Young people aged 0-25 having the best life chances through an active start in life, regardless of their social or demographic background.

**3**

Physical activity frequently used as a proven intervention tool across numerous sectors (e.g. community safety, health, transport, education and skills).

**4**

Active ageing as a social norm for all older adults, regardless of their social or demographic background.

**5**

Active and sustainable environments and communities existing across the region through active design and infrastructure.

**6**

An embedded range of 'best in class' and accessible digital resources that support physical activity utilisation across services that help communities to be active in ways that work for them.

**7**

Physical inactivity data and insight being used by partners across the system to inform service design, delivery and prioritisation.

**8**

People connected together through physical activity and sport and championing its role in improving their neighbourhood, group or community.

**9**

A thriving community of organisations delivering physical activity and sport opportunities in a safe and sustainable way.

**10**

Rise as a valued, strong and sustainable charity within the system.

**11**

A reduction in health inequalities across the region.

**12**

An increase in both active and fairly active levels across the region, together with an increase in the perceived capability and perceived opportunity to take part in sport and physical activity across all demographic groups.





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Our culture, highlighted through our three values, will underpin all of our work. We will:

### **CATALYSE CHANGE:**

**WE BELIEVE THAT CHANGE IS POSSIBLE AND WE'RE READY TO LEAD THE EXPLORATION.**

### **POSITIVELY DISRUPT:**

**TO CHALLENGE THE NORM AND CAUSE RADICAL CHANGE THROUGH INNOVATION AND LEARNING.**

### **COLLABORATE:**

**TOGETHER WE ARE GREATER THAN THE SUM OF OUR PARTS. PEOPLE MAKE THE CHANGE.**

In addition, we, along with colleagues across the Active Partnership network, are striving to be anti-racist, not just 'not-racist'. We also want to demonstrate a clear stance against all forms of inequality. Throughout the lifetime of this strategy, and beyond, we will endeavour to understand, and be pro-active around tackling, any forms of prejudice.



# MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

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The majority of our 12 aims are qualitative in nature, not quantitative, and demonstrating progression towards them over the next 10 years will be a challenge when they are not immediately visible or 'countable'. Causation is also difficult to attribute in complex systems, and so a new approach to measurement will be required. In addition, we are seeking to 'measure' for the purpose of enabling to learn, rather than just to 'monitor' or 'control'.

Much of this approach will require a shift to a focus on relationships, networks, trust and organisational/culture change, as opposed to tangible 'stuff'. We are committed to moving towards talking about the value that is accumulating and articulating how it will lead to impact in our region.

As we were developing the Rise Together strategy, we explored the concept of value with Revaluation<sup>6</sup> and the following case study is a useful example of how we need to consider value generated in a broader, less traditional, sense.

## An innovative process for measuring the 'full value' of activity in complex systems

– Andrew Darnton, Revaluation





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## VIRTUAL SCHOOL GAMES - A VALUE CASE STUDY

The Level 3 School Games Finals is a multi-sport event that has taken place every Summer since 2012. When lockdown was announced by the government in March 2020, we had to adapt quickly to devise, organise and deliver an event that pupils could participate in whether they were children of key workers still at school, or studying at home. The result was our first Virtual School Games (VSG) events for Northumberland and Tyne & Wear.

After the events, we took some time to evaluate this new way of delivering the School Games by bringing together the team who had been involved in developing and delivering it. As well as looking at standard metrics that identified visible and direct KPIs, the team were guided through a process to identify the invisible and indirect value of the project not normally considered, such as impact on mental well-being, attracting



children beyond those normal 'sporty' participants, tackling inequalities that Covid-19 had inflated and changing the perceptions about what School Games events should look like.

By using this approach to evaluation, we soon began to identify a broader range of value-added outcomes. We have been able to see that the events provided more than simply an

alternative means of participating in the school games programme. The additional value has proved critical to providing the team with a clearer view on how to deliver the event in future, regardless of lockdown restrictions.





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# TO CREATE A HIGHER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR COMMUNITIES THAT NEED IT THE MOST IN NORTHUMBERLAND AND TYNE & WEAR.

# RISE.

**INFO@WEARERISE.CO.UK**

**WeAreRise.co.uk**

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