

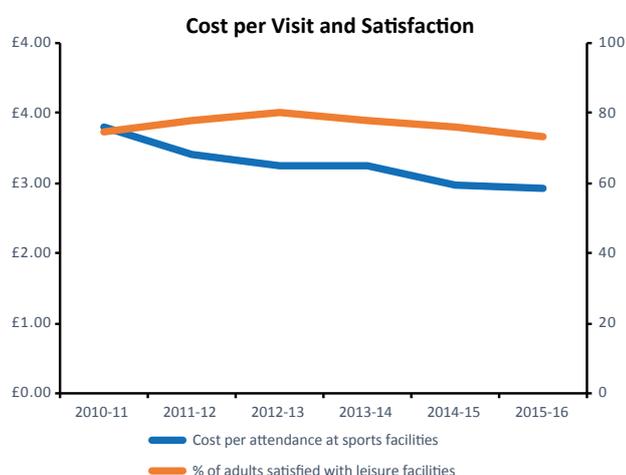
Sports Briefing 2017

Culture and leisure services play an important role in the quality of life in local communities. In addition to the social and economic benefits delivered, the impact they have on promoting better health and wellbeing of the population and in reducing demand on other core services is well documented.

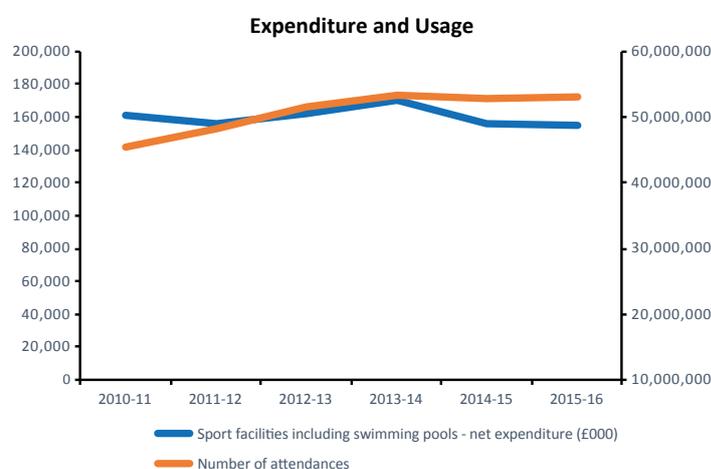
Culture and leisure services can also connect well with communities that more traditional and regulated services often struggle to reach. However, given there is little in the way of statutory protection for culture and leisure spending, culture and leisure services face a particularly challenging financial context across the coming period.

For Sports, over the six-year period from 2010/11 to 2015/16 the average unit cost has reduced from £3.81 to £2.99 in real terms. In percentage terms, this represents a 21.4% reduction. Meanwhile, satisfaction rates have started to reduce in the past few years.

Cost per visit and Satisfaction



Expenditure and Usage

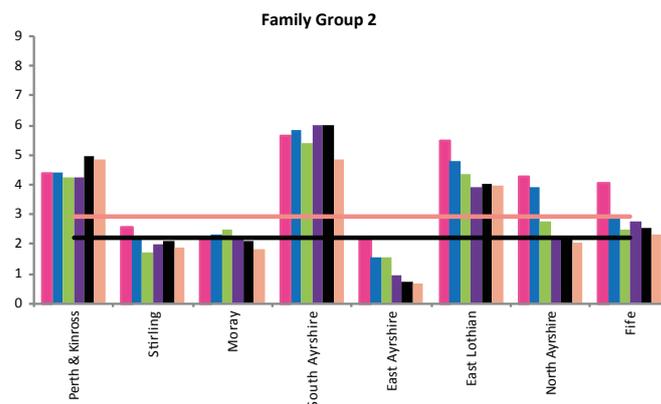
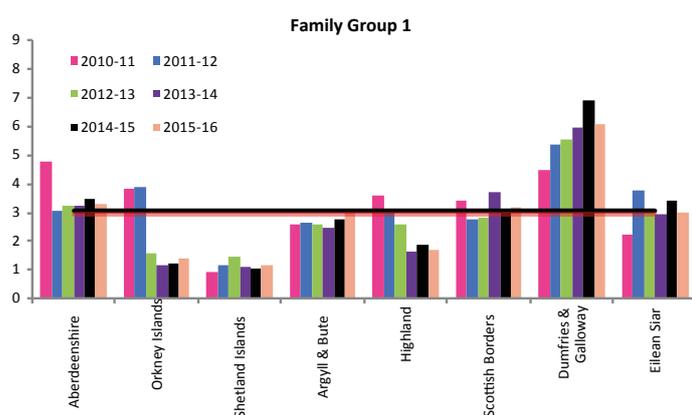


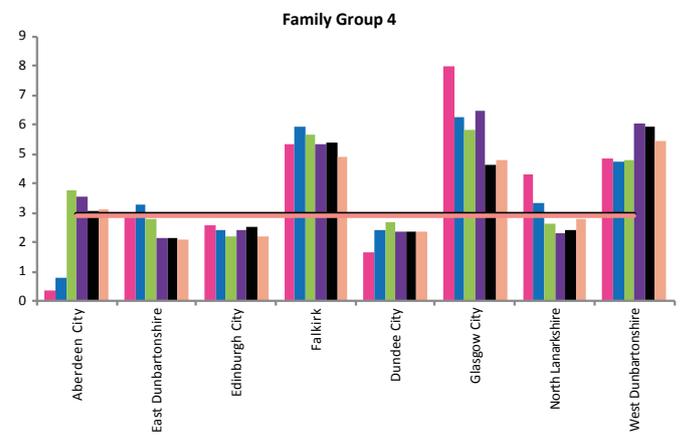
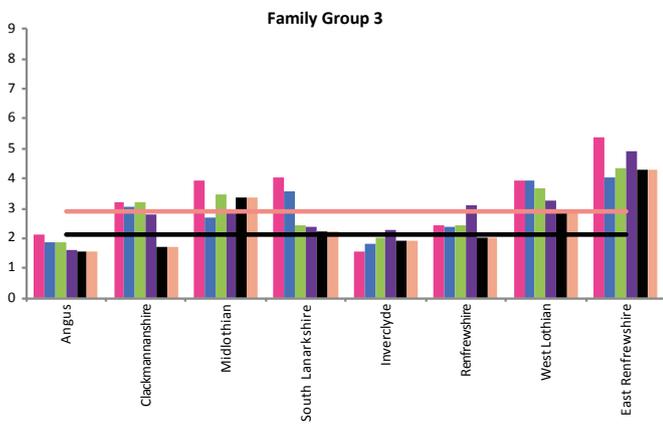
Significant increases in visitor numbers have been achieved against a backdrop of reductions in real net expenditure. However, the growth in service users has slowed in recent years, growing only 0.7% in the past 12 months. Over the 6-year period, the significant increase in user numbers while the unit cost has fallen indicates that leisure and recreation services have managed to attract more people into using their facilities while managing significant financial pressures. A key factor here may be the significant capital investment programme in sports facilities across Scotland 10 years ago now bearing fruit. However, it may be that the additional capacity generated through this investment has now been reached and thus the growth in user numbers is now tapering off.

Variation

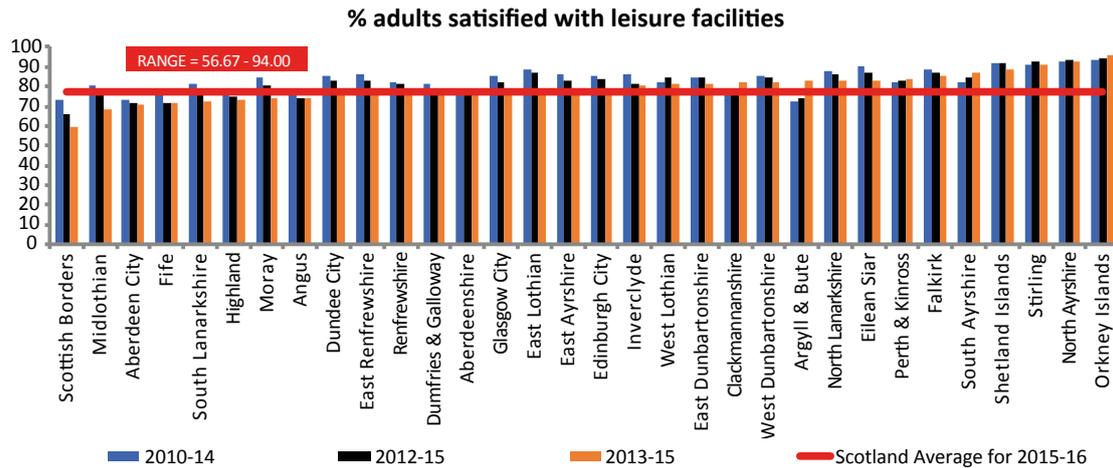
The picture across councils with respect to the general trend is not universal. In 2015/16, costs per attendance at a sports facility ranged from £0.68 to £7.06. This variation is presented below by Family Group (councils are grouped by rurality). Satisfaction levels vary considerably across Scotland, ranging from 57% - 94%.

Family Groups - Cost per Visit





% adults satisfied with leisure facilities



While there is significant variation in both cost and satisfaction trends across councils, there are no systematic effects of deprivation, sparsity or council size. However, work within Family Groups has identified the following factors as important in understanding the variation between authorities:

- Local political and strategic priority given to the role of culture and leisure in supporting improvement in wider outcomes, e.g. health and wellbeing, educational outcomes, tackling inequality, economic development, community empowerment, etc.
- Scale of provision and level of service (e.g. opening hours)
- Digital channel shift
- Service delivery model and level of in house and trust delivery
- Staffing composition, level and roles
- Level of volunteering, community involvement and asset transfer
- Income generation capacity
- Asset management and co-location/multi-use premises

Sharing Practice – March 2017 Benchmarking Event

Against the challenging financial climate, Sports services are increasingly required to balance competing priorities around improving outcomes, tackling inequality and promoting community empowerment, with the need to maximise income generation.

Strengthening the evidence base and demonstrating impact

More than ever, Sports services require a robust evidence base on how sports services impact their local communities. Some councils are focusing on preventative work, for example **East Dunbartonshire's** partnership with the community safety partnership has delivered demonstrable success in reducing in anti-social behaviour, while **North Lanarkshire** is also able to demonstrate success in their approaches to offering diversionary activities on Friday/Saturday nights.

In terms of demonstrating impact, **Stirling** have found participant impact stories are beneficial to promote the service,

as have The **East Ayrshire** trust programme which is focusing on wider outcomes and capturing impact stories at an individual level. **West Lothian** is aiming to improve the physical wellbeing and mental health of the local community through structured, supported exercise programmes and actively monitor outreach numbers for their STEPS programme.

'Closing the gap' is a key a priority for **Perth & Kinross**, and they are bringing together data from a range of sources to track individual young people. **Shetland** developed a new sports strategy which includes a focus on joint working with health.

Partnership with communities

Partnership with communities to design and deliver services in line with the ethos of the Community Empowerment Act is a growing emphasis for authorities/trusts. Recognising the challenges involved in supporting communities to sustain services, a partnership where the sports service provides the professional knowledge and expertise to run the services but community involvement provides greater input and freedom to access additional funding was promoted as the most successful model (e.g. **North Lanarkshire and Broadwood stadium**).

East Ayrshire are undertaking considerable work around community asset transfer, and have funded a post which works with the council and community groups to ensure there is a smooth transition. Several sporting facilities have been transferred including a golf course and pitches and pavilions, delivering savings in running costs as well as a reduction in maintenance and repairs liability. The programme also delivers additional community benefits around health and wellbeing and community capacity building. Many sports services carry out significant outreach work and engagement with their local communities (for example **Stirling and Highland**).

Income Generation

Access to finance is key for all sports services. In many cases, the further transfer of school estate/community centre facilities to local Trust management provides increased opportunities for income generation and also expands provision out into local communities (e.g. **West Lothian** report this has had an impact on their unit costs). Additionally, NHS funding is key to the current income streams for sports/leisure trusts. Most organisations have raised prices, and **Renfrewshire** have adopted a commercial sales approach to maximise income streams. Some councils, like **Perth & Kinross**, are tapping into the additional funding for schools to reduce inequalities.

Improving Access

Improving access for harder to reach communities is also a key focus for many sports services, whether around reducing financial inequality or increasing access for younger and older people. **Perth & Kinross** offer free membership to S4/5/6 pupils during exam time and are working on addressing wider outcomes such as health and education. They recently joined in partnership with MacMillan Cancer Charity to deliver the 'Move More' programme, while **Highland** have a specific health & wellbeing post joint funded by the NHS to provide exercise programmes for patients in major hospitals. **Dumfries & Galloway** are focused on reducing inequalities through free leisure access programmes for looked after children and older people.

Orkney has a new membership scheme based on that of **Highland**, who were highlighted as being further ahead than some in this area. **East Lothian** host annual sports awards that focus on the personal impact that physical activity has made. Additionally, many services have developed multi use schools built specifically for use as sports venues after school hours (For example **Aberdeenshire and Highland**).



Useful Links

Presentation: [Dumfries & Galloway Linking to Wider Outcomes](#)

Presentation: [West Lothian Health & Wellbeing](#)

Explore the LGBF data by service, across councils and over time using the [My Local Council Tool](#)