

# Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust



## Telling the story of our actions Using Social Return on Investment

December 2013 *Headline Report*



With a primary objective of 'making sport and leisure facilities available for all, through a range of affordable and accessible activities at free or subsidised rates', over the past five years, Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust have developed programs that are both innovative and exciting which tackle the broader issues of improving people's health (both physical and mental), reducing obesity, providing alternatives to crime and anti-social behaviour, facilitating social inclusion and helping young people back into employment.

In recent years, Manchester, like many local authorities, has had to undertake reviews on local government spending that jeopardise the provision of everyday public services, such as leisure and sports centres. These reviews have presented and continue to present additional challenges to our business. However, during any difficult times, additional opportunities will always be available if you're progressive and pro-active, ensuring that our primary objective can continue to be achieved, despite such pressures.



Alan Benzie, Chairman  
Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust

(Extract from foreword to the report)

# Background to the report

## Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust

Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust (MSLT) is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, formed in 1997 to manage the Manchester Aquatics Centre and then 10 community leisure centres. Their portfolio now consists of 18 unique sports facilities, including the world-class facilities at Sportcity. At each facility they run a number of innovative and exciting projects aimed at promoting health and fitness across Manchester.

The benefits, to the individual, the family, carers, wider society and to the public purse, far outweigh the cost of provision.

MSLT took the decision to undertake an independent Social Return on Investment study in order to evaluate what value a selection of these projects were bringing to society, namely:

- ▶ Management of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD) and Cardiac Care;
- ▶ Neurological and Stroke Rehabilitation;
- ▶ Women only services;
- ▶ Services for those with disabilities; and
- ▶ Physical activity for the general population

## Importance of promoting fitness

The prevalence of clinical obesity in Manchester is such that it is estimated that 14,000 children are obese along with 90,000 adults. These figures are on a rising trend.

In addition to the economic impacts of participation in exercise, the Cabinet Office's 2002 report highlights the wider benefits of sport, including:

In Manchester  
14,000 children  
& 90,000 adults  
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be clinically  
obese

- ▶ Personal satisfaction and better social life;
- ▶ Improved overall health (both physical and mental);
- ▶ Improved educational outcomes; and
- ▶ Crime reduction and social inclusion.

The Department of Health estimated the NHS costs due to the population's physical inactivity to be between £1 billion and £1.8 billion per annum. The cost of lost productivity has been calculated at approximately £5.5 billion due to sickness absence and £1 billion from premature death of people of working age.

## COPD & Cardiac Care Management

Costs for the NHS for treatment of COPD have been calculated at £800 million by NICE. The work that MSLT carries out in enabling individuals to manage their condition helps reduce the need for medication, increase the confidence of the individual and free up the time of family members and friends who had been fulfilling carer roles.

## Neurological & Stroke Rehabilitation

People who have suffered a stroke or another neurological episode can have issues with mobility and co-ordination and it is these aspects on which MSLT's work focusses. The intervention enables participants to work together on exercises and activities that reflect everyday tasks individuals will come across.

People attend these sessions with a carer or a physiotherapist and MSLT engage with these people as part of the rehabilitation progress. This helps develop the relationship between carer and individual, both benefitting in mental health terms. It also helps carers to understand the needs and capabilities of the people they are caring for, enabling a more effective level of support.

## Women-only activities

Men are 30% more likely to take regular exercise than women and one of the causes to this is the lack of facilities where women feel able to exercise freely. The research group highlighted that women from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background frequently expressed the view that they did not feel able to exercise as they could not access any women-only sessions. This lack of access, especially for the older generation, can perpetuate the problem down the generations as it is generally the older women in the family who set an example for younger ones. By accessing exercise and promoting the benefits they are able to make changes which will benefit future generations of families.

## Services for those with disabilities

The key to MSLT's success in their activities for disabled people is the company-wide ethos of inclusion and acceptance and their strong partnership with Manchester City Council (MCC). One of the major hurdles faced by people with disabilities is the public's misconceptions about the extent and effect of their disabilities, and their being uncomfortable in the company of disabled people. By being able to offer a wide range of services in an "universal setting" with staff who are both understanding and accepting, this models appropriate behaviours for the wider public, and enables individuals to feel included within a community setting. In turn this has great benefits for their mental health.

## A robust, tried and tested methodology

Baker Tilly have worked with an SROI Project Team, comprising three MSLT staff, two MCC staff and one Managing Agent (Serco) staff member, to carry out an Action Research process.

### Action Research

Action Research, or Action Science as some prefer to call it, is a recognised and respected research approach originating in the social sciences arena, which involves the researcher, and the researched jointly learning in and investigating the research area.

Whilst primarily a qualitative methodology, it can be constructed in such a way as to gather and test data with levels of validity that would constitute scientific research (as opposed to casual enquiry) whilst retaining the proximity to that data that best comes from working with those who are involved with it.

The researcher works with the researched jointly to investigate an issue of common interest. Together they gather data, test and validate it, and draw interpretations and conclusions out through a prescribed approach.

1. Observation
2. Reflection
3. Data gathering
4. Test claims and conclude
5. Monitor improvements

Prior to this, a meeting with the SROI Project Team was held to determine the key services that MSLT provide, the outcomes of these services and the beneficiaries. Three further meetings were held, interspersed with the SROI Project Team testing out the conclusions from each workshop by practical application in their work, then reporting the results back to the next meeting.

Additional phone call discussions were held between these meetings to consider and challenge emerging evidence from internal and external consultation. Members of the group were encouraged to discuss emerging findings with colleagues in order to confirm their views on the manner in which the areas of work under review achieve a change in outcomes for beneficiaries (known as the theory of change) and the extent of the change achieved.

For certain projects, the group co-ordinated further work to gather feedback on the success of projects from beneficiaries and external stakeholders as evidence to form a basis for certain key assumptions used in this study.



Based on this research, the SROI Project Team was involved in co-developing potential means of evaluating the impact of these services by substituting financial measures (proxies) for the outcomes described.

Data and assumptions provided by staff at MSLT have been relied upon in our analysis; Baker Tilly has acted to facilitate MSLT's understanding of the methodologies used to evaluate the impact.

“ The findings have helped us further cement and gain a better understanding of the importance of our role and our primary objectives in Manchester. ”

Alan Benzie, Chairman  
Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust

# Results

Assessed Service	Evaluated gains
Management of COPD and Cardiac Care	£ 2,751,305
Neurological and Stroke Rehabilitation	£ 1,834,476
Activities for Disabled People	£ 1,755,966
Women-only Activities	£ 958,284
Wider Health and Fitness Services	£ 29,893,162
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 37,193,193</b>

The table above shows total benefits from the projects included in this evaluation to be at least:

**£37 million per annum.**

We have also evaluated benefits in relation to expenditure saved over a 12 month period relating to narrow and wider cashable savings, alongside some local area economic value created.

From the services evaluated it would be expected that were they to be removed, within a timeframe of 6 to 18 months after the withdrawal of services, the following additional costs would be incurred.

The evaluations focussed on three key areas:

**Physical health benefits -**  
Looking at decreased costs of care for managing existing conditions, decreasing the number of sick days taken and reducing the number of hospitalisations required.

**Mental health benefits -**  
Valuing the gain to personal confidence and mental well-being from exercise and, where applicable, a better understanding of an individual's needs and capabilities.

**Increased employment -**  
By freeing up the time of informal carers, helping to engage children with exercise and possible careers in health and fitness.

These areas were evaluated over applicable timescales and broadened to include the impacts on friends and family from an increased engagement with health and fitness.

**This evaluation has helped to illustrate the wide reaching impact exercise can make on communities and the importance the provision of accessible services can make to society.**

Further information on the themes discussed can be found in the Full Report produced by Baker Tilly and Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust. This can be requested from the contact details included at the end of this document.

Assessed Service	Value Lost
Management of COPD and Cardiac Care	£511,762
Neurological and Stroke Rehabilitation	£490,108
Activities for Disabled People	£314,809
Women-only Activities	£149,842
Wider Health and Fitness Services	£7,778,397
<b>Total assessed Narrow Social Impact</b>	<b>£9,244,918</b>





Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust is now one of many Third Sector organisations that are seeking to show the social impact of its work. Against a traditional tendency to emphasise the good in what is being achieved for beneficiaries (be they individuals or communities), we are all increasingly asking “**what effect did it have?**” and “**how did you do that?**” All too rarely do even the best of organisations get the chance to stop and ask those questions, yet when they do it becomes a time of revelation. This was certainly the case for the MSLT team as they were able to link the reactions from various regular and not-so-regular participants in their activities with the often life-changing effects that those bring to them every day.

Social Impact Measurement is increasingly being recognised not as a fascinating, but optional extra, or even a new idea, but as a key part of the mainstream: in public commissioning, which must now be outcomes-based, and as a foundation for the emerging social investment sector. SROI is a methodology within that field which addresses two key aspects of impact: clarifying and quantifying the economic, social and environmental effects - the change achieved - and developing the theory of change, linking the change achieved, or outcome, back to the activity that achieved that.

SROI can become a process-driven exercise in which the answer emerges as a function of the process. It can also suffer from the use of financial proxies that have a poor correlation with the outcomes they attempt to measure, or are based on over-enthusiastic assumptions, and a lack of robustness in linking outcomes to the activities in which they originate. This is not the case here. As is increasingly the case for SROI studies of this type, the evaluations have been developed with real thought, care and prudence, and are soundly based on validated underlying data, with conservative assumptions where such are necessary.



**Jim Clifford OBE**  
Head of Social Impact Services  
Baker Tilly

Jim Clifford is Head of Non-profit Advisory Services, and Chairs the Public Sector Group at Baker Tilly. He has authored a number of high profile social impact and cost studies including the social impact protocol for Sector Skills Councils, published in 2010, the study of PACT’s domestic adoption and fostering services, referenced in the Narey Report on Adoption, Alana House Women’s Community Centre, the PRTC National Carer’s Centre Network, and comparative study of costs of special schools for NASS. Following from the PACT study he led the development of the Sector’s response: “It’s All About Me”, the first voluntary sector-originated Social Impact Bond, and has since been appointed its first Chair. He is also technical chair of the GECES subgroup advising the European Commission on the development of social impact measurement under emerging EU policy for social enterprise. He is a Visiting Fellow at Cass Business School’s Centre for Charity Effectiveness where he is undertaking research into evaluative protocols for transactional decision making (linking Social Impact with conventional valuation and brand valuation). He is a non-executive director of the Centre for Public Scrutiny. He was awarded an OBE in 2013 for services to social investment.

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