



# Coca-Cola Park Lives

## Year One Evaluation Report

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More people  
More active  
More often

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# Executive Summary

As part of a novel initiative to promote healthier, happier and more active communities, Coca-Cola Great Britain (CCGB) has launched *Parklives* in partnership with local authorities to deliver a dedicated programme of free-to-user activity sessions in community parks.

2014 (Year 1) saw the development and launch of *Parklives* in three local authorities; Birmingham, Newcastle, and Newham. This constituted Phase 1 of a seven year programme that is currently funded to Autumn 2020.

This document reports survey data from the conceptualisation and development phases of *Parklives*, indicating the impact of marketing and awareness activity across the three participating authorities in comparison with control regions, as well as data collected at *Parklives* sessions between April and October 2014.

## Attitudes toward the *Parklives* concept

The *Parklives* concept, albeit without branding or precise details of activities, was presented to a representative cohort (n=2105) of three sub-groups of individuals towards whom *Parklives* is targeted, that is mothers of young children, low income families, and inactive adults. Data indicated that whilst *Parklives* was rated as appealing and something that people would be likely to attend with friends and family, the nature of activities would be a major determinant of participation.

Analysis of survey data (n=750 split between participating cities and a control city) suggested that whilst awareness of *Parklives* was highest amongst young mothers, awareness was relatively low generally. Interaction with media sources was the highest among teenagers in comparison with young adults and mothers of young children. Radio advertising was found to be more effective in raising awareness of *Parklives* than social media or press advertising in all three sub-groups.

When informed that Coca-Cola were the sponsor of the programme, mums (38%), young adults (47%) and teens (28%) rated the programme as 'not appealing' scoring it between 1-5 out of 10. However, in those aware of the details of *Parklives*, this figure dropped to 5%, 15%, and 11% respectively. This shift in opinion was most dramatic in mothers of young children. Those individuals rating the programme as 'appealing' i.e. scoring it 8-10 out of 10, increased from 36% to 60% when aware of what *Parklives* offered.

## Participation rates

2854 free-to-user *Parklives* sessions were delivered between April and October 2014. These were offered in 61 different parks across the three participating cities. Recorded total attendance was 22,495 for the same period, with 12,860 unique individuals registering attendance. Data capture was however problematic in Newham and Newcastle making the total number of participants attending difficult to report. In Birmingham however 10,598 individuals contributed to a total attendance figure of 17,610. 56.4% of those attending were at that time failing to meet the Chief Medical Officer's recommended levels of physical activity of 150 minutes each week. In Birmingham, 50.5% of participants lived in the most deprived 20% of the city based upon IMD band.

Engagement with local authorities. Initial engagement between CCGB and local authorities (LAs) was not easy. Co-operation between commercial bodies and LAs / public health teams is often a complicated process. There is furthermore a general sense of caution among and within LAs when dealing with organisations such as CCGB. With this in mind, clarity of objectives was required to ensure that both CCGB and all departments within LAs were aware of what was to be offered and importantly who they were going to be offered to, that is, the target demographics, in this case those living in areas of high deprivation and the currently inactive population.

Public Health teams were however not so confident in the ultimate outcomes and aims of the initiative and blocked many initial conversations between authorities and CCGB. At least one of the local authorities taking part in Phase 1 was directly advised against engagement with Coca-Cola by its public health team.

Ultimately however, finance and politics are powerful factors in such conversations. In at least one local authority, the risk:benefit ratio associated with providing *Parklives* sessions to the local community was considered sufficient to overcome initial internal objection.

An alignment of priorities and focus has ultimately led to a largely positive working relationship between CCGB and LAs. This is only accentuated by the growing awareness that *Parklives* sessions are beginning to have an impact in local communities, an impact that has the potential to grow year on year.

# 1. Introduction

As part of a novel initiative to promote healthier, happier and more active communities, Coca-Cola Great Britain (CCGB) has launched *Parklives* in partnership with local authorities to deliver a dedicated programme of free-to-user activity sessions in community parks. *Parklives* is an ambitious initiative that brings a level of marketing expertise and resource that has rarely been focused upon the promotion of physical activity (PA) (Change-4-Life is arguably not dissimilar but was not focused on physical activity alone). *Parklives* aims to utilise, in relation to the promotion of PA, the brand and marketing expertise of CCGB on a scale that is beyond the means of local authority public health teams. 2014 (Year 1) saw the development and launch of *Parklives* in three local authorities; Birmingham, Newcastle, and Newham. This constituted Phase 1 of a seven year programme that is currently funded to Autumn 2020.

## The activities

The *Parklives* model involves CCGB partnering with local authorities to fund and deliver a programme of activities within parks. All activities are provided free of charge to participants and have been designed to offer something suitable for a range of ages, interests and physical activity levels. Sessions offered in Year 1 included 'Lads and Dads' football, Tai Chi, Buggy Fit, gardening/park maintenance, and general play (the latter supported by play equipment and facilitated by a coordinator). The target audience for *Parklives* is a wide demographic, albeit with a focus on teens and families and in particular young mothers. It is however recognised that *Parklives* has the potential to appeal to a broader audience of young adults / professionals, and older adults. Consultation with public health stakeholders highlighted a recommendation to focus marketing on older teens i.e. 15 years plus.

## The venues

Parks were identified as the venue for *Parklives* on the basis of the vital - and ideally sustainable - role they play in many communities. Parks provide free and open areas for people to be active in both formal and informal fashion; they represent a focal point for leisure activities across all ages and social demographics. They are, or can be, an inclusive, social and family-friendly area to host activity. Visibility is also a key aspect of parks, they offer those individuals who may not traditionally engage with exercise the opportunity to observe one or more activities and to engage with those that appeal. Such visible activity, as contrasted with activities shut away in gyms, might have the

significant effect of encouraging more people to view exercise as a cultural norm.

## Commercial interests

*Parklives* has not been developed as a commercial programme. Whilst it would be naïve of CCGB to ignore potential PR benefits, CCGB have publically stated that the success or otherwise of *Parklives* is not being measured in terms of any changes in product sales. Instead, the success of *Parklives* will be measured in terms of the number of individuals who attend and ideally continue to attend *Parklives* sessions over the period of the programme. CCGB and the Evaluation Committee are however aware of and sensitive to the concerns of public health agencies and other stakeholders in this respect. There has been, and will be, no Coca-Cola product sampling within parks. In short, *Parklives* has been developed as part of CCGB's commitment to being a responsible business and part of the government's Public Health Responsibility Deal, encouraging active lifestyles, investing in sustainable communities and expanding its long heritage of support for grassroots programmes such as Street Games and Special Olympics GB.

## Branding

Following consultation with key public health stakeholders it was decided that the initiative be fronted by Coca-Cola Zero, a no sugar, no calorie brand, that is 'Coca-Cola Zero *Parklives*'.

## This report

The purpose of this evaluation is to understand how *Parklives* was developed and delivered during the first year, and to provide insight that will enable recommendations for Year 2 delivery. Particular emphasis is placed on the engagement between CCGB and local authorities, and the processes required to launch the initiative and to host nearly 3000 activity sessions across 60 parks. This document reports survey data from the conceptualisation and development phases of *Parklives*, indicating the impact of marketing and awareness activity across the three participating authorities in comparison with control regions, as well as data collected at *Parklives* sessions between April and October 2014. Data presented are both quantitative, for example participation levels and demographic information, and qualitative, for example operational reports from the local authorities, session leaders, and CCGB. This information has been utilised in developing recommendations for the delivery of *Parklives* in 2015 and further to 2020.

## 2. Concept Development and Testing

### Attitudes to *Parklives* survey data

Attitudes towards *Parklives* as a concept i.e. without any associated Coca Cola Zero branding, were surveyed during initial development. The objective was to understand whether *Parklives* carried any overall appeal, and any appeal specifically for mothers with young children, low income families, young adults, and inactive adults. Participants were surveyed in both Birmingham (n=1381) and Newcastle (n=724), and filters applied according to city, gender, activity levels, children living at home, income, and age.

Of the 2105 people that completed the survey 62% were female and 38% male, distributed as follows:

**Table 1. Age**

Age	Percentage
18-24	12%
25-34	22%
35-40	15%
40+	51%

**Table 2. Income**

Income	Percentage
High (e.g., Managerial)	7%
Middle (e.g., Intermediate Management, Skilled, Supervisor).	53%
Low (Housewife/ husband, Student, Semi-Skilled or Unskilled, Unemployed).	40%
40+	51%

**Table 3. Children living with parents**

Children at home	Percentage
Yes	42%
No	58%

**Table 4. Age of children**

Age of children	Percentage
16+	20%
Secondary School	18%
Primary School	41%
Toddler	21%

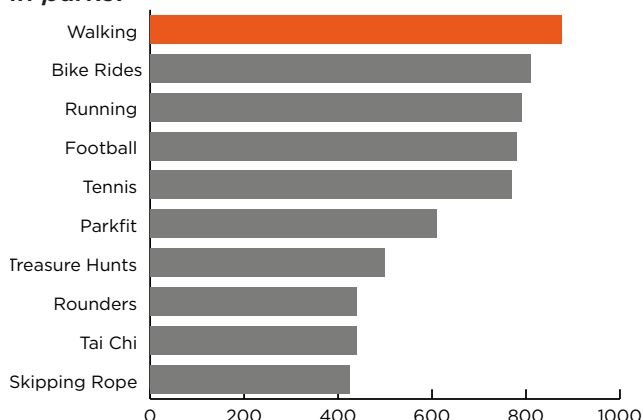
**Table 5. Physical activity levels**  
(N.B. Responses based upon Single Item Physical Activity Questionnaire).

Level of activity	Percentage
Inactive	13%
1-2 days per week	33%
3-5 days per week	45%
5-7 days per week	9%

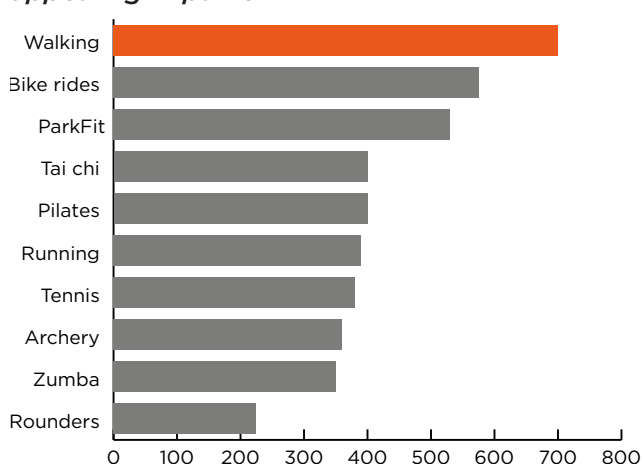
### Preferred activities

Respondents were asked to identify activities they would expect to be on offer in *Parklives* and which would be perceived as most appealing. Alongside expected activities such as walking and bike riding, activities such as ParkFit, Tai Chi, and Zumba were identified as appealing (Figures 1&2).

**Figure 1. Which activities would you expect in parks?**

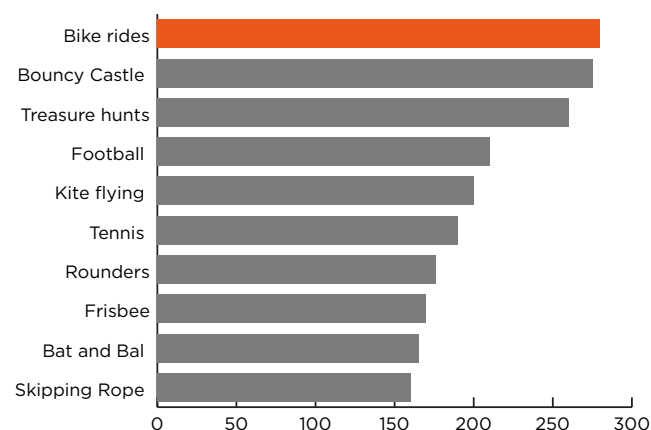


**Figure 2. Which activities would be most appealing in parks?**



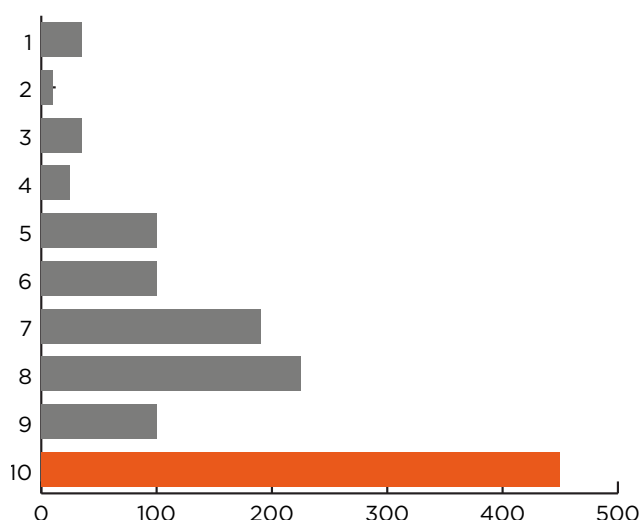
Those activities perceived as most appealing to children are bike rides, bouncy castles, and treasure hunts, alongside football (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Which activities would be most appealing to children? (Top 10)**

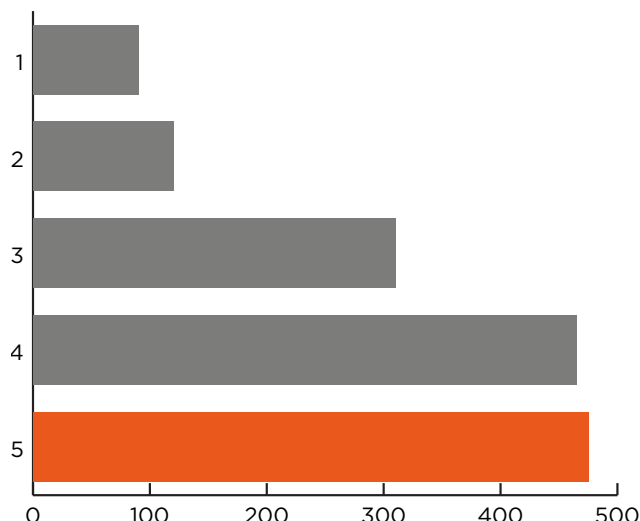


Data suggested that the *Parklives* concept was both appealing to people, and something they would bring a friend along to (Figures 4 & 5).

**Figure 4. How appealing is this initiative to you?**



**Figure 5. Would you bring a friend?**



In response to the question “What would encourage you to take part in *Parklives*?” it is apparent that the activities on offer would be an influencing factor:



Whilst a question relating to how people currently enjoy spending their free time indicated that spending time with family and friends is important:



Questions then related specifically to the target populations i.e. mothers with children, young adults, and inactive populations.

## Mothers with Children

Mothers with children responded more positively to the concept of *Parklives* than when all responses were considered. 74% of those surveyed rating the concept as 8/10 or above. This population aligned strongly with all responses in terms of what activities they would expect in the park and which activities are most appealing – although Zumba moved up the rankings in terms of something that would be appealing.

When asked how Mums with children like to spend their time, data suggest that relaxation is a significant driver, with walking, reading, and family and friends the most frequent answers.





Questions relating to expected / desirable activities revealed no differences between young adults with no children and all responses. The time of day during which they would like activities to be provided did however shift from weekdays in and around school drop off time (as indicated by mothers with children) and weekends (all respondents) to later in the evenings on weekdays. Free text responses reveal a focus upon socialising in the way in which this population wants to spend their free time, and that 'things to do' (i.e. activities), and the opportunity to socialise may provide drivers to behaviour:

exercising



Data suggested that although this group completed little or no activity, the concept of *Parklives* was appealing (Figure 6) and people would be likely to bring a friend (Figure 7):

Age Group	Percentage
1	22
2	20
3	28
4	24
5	25
6	27
7	31
8	46
9	31
10	97

A horizontal bar chart with the y-axis labeled 1 through 5 and the x-axis labeled 0 through 80. The bars represent the following percentages: 1 (27%), 2 (38%), 3 (57%), 4 (46%), and 5 (76%). The bar for age group 5 is highlighted in orange, while the others are grey.

Age Group	Percentage
1	27%
2	38%
3	57%
4	46%
5	76%

*What would encourage you to take part in Parklives?*



### 3. Reactions to media campaign

To increase awareness of *Parklives* a media campaign was launched in each of the three participating cities. The aim of the campaign was to generate interest, and ultimately drive participation, in *Parklives*.

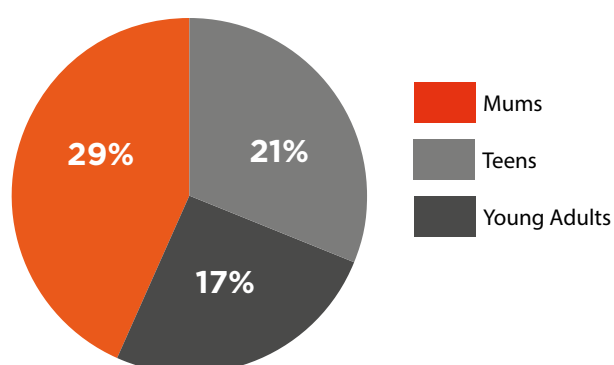
The impact of the campaign and perceptions of *Parklives* were assessed. Data were collected via an online survey during summer 2014 (28th July – 15th August). A total of 750 people, targeted as likely members of key demographics, completed the survey. Participants were surveyed in the participating cities and in control cities where the *Parklives* campaign was not present. The breakdown of participants is provided below.

**Table 6. Breakdown of respondents to awareness survey**

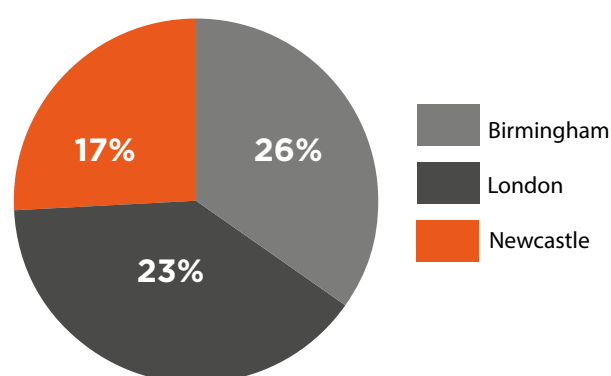
Target Group	Test	Control
Teens	50 teens aged 13-19 in London 50 teens aged 13-19 in Newcastle 50 teens aged 13-19 in Birmingham	100 x teens aged 13-19 not in London, Newcastle or Birmingham
Young Mums	50 x young mums aged 24-40 with at least 1 child in the household in London 50 x young mums aged 24-40 with at least 1 child in the household in Newcastle 50 x young mums aged 24-40 with at least 1 child in the household in Birmingham	100 x young mums with at least 1 child in the household aged 24-40 not in London, Newcastle or Birmingham
Young Adults	50 x young adults aged 20-30 in London* 50 x young adults aged 20-30 in Newcastle 50 x young adults aged 20-30 in Birmingham	100 x young adults aged 20-30 not in London, Newcastle or Birmingham

A major challenge associated with any large scale physical activity intervention is letting people know it is both available and suitable for them. Of those surveyed, only 22% of respondents in participating cities were aware of the *Parklives* initiative (Figure 9). Awareness was greatest in young mothers and teenagers, although this was still relatively low, whilst only 17% of young adults were aware *Parklives* existed (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Coca Cola Zero Parklives - awareness by group**



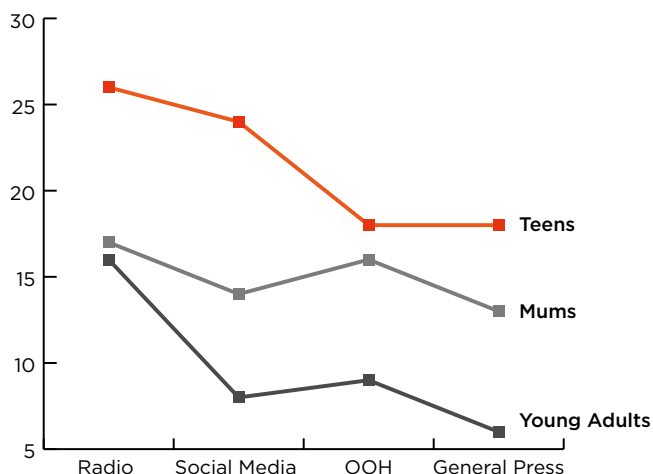
**Figure 8. Coca Cola Zero Parklives - awareness by city**



In total 76% and 62% of the sample indicated they believed the initiative was targeted at teenagers and/or parents with young children respectively. Differences in respondents' views as to the intended outcome of *Parklives* were also evident, with the majority of teenagers indicating 'trying to make exercise entertaining and sociable for people', whilst mothers and young adults saw it as 'trying to make people lead more active lifestyles'. These data may provide an insight into the requirements of the two different population groups when it comes to choosing activity sessions.

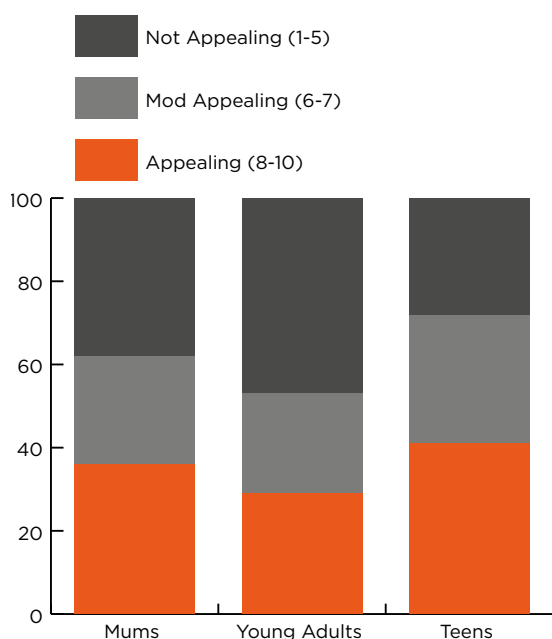
Teenagers' interaction with the various advertising outlets was highest, and radio advertising was revealed as the most effective method for increasing awareness in each of the three population groups (Figure 10). Very few young adults remembered seeing or hearing any of the advertising or publicity materials. In fact, this group were revealed as the hardest to reach, convince, and engage with.

**Figure 10. Interaction with advertising method by target group**



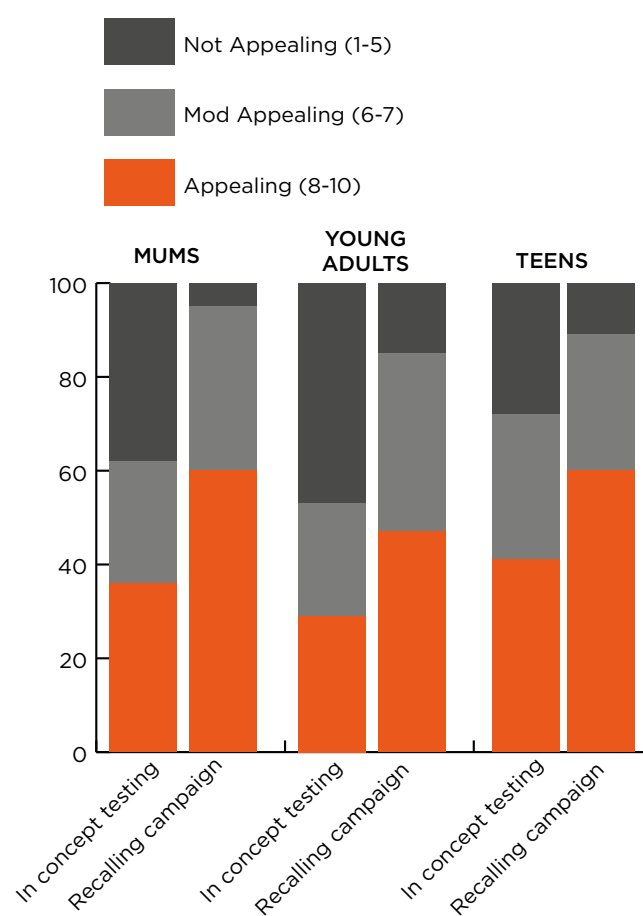
Participants were informed that Coca-Cola Zero is the main partner of the initiative and asked, with this in mind, how appealing was the programme? It is clear that young adults were particularly sceptical about the idea of Coca-Cola Zero as the principle sponsor (Figure 11). Conversely however few teens suggested this lessened the appeal of *Parklives*, in fact 41% rated its appeal as greater than 8/10.

**Figure 11. Appealing when aware of sponsor?**



The picture is however slightly different when the same question is asked of individuals fully aware of the programme i.e. understanding what the *Parklives* offer entailed. In particular the percentage of young mums who initially indicated the initiative was not appealing shifted from 38% scoring it above 8/10 to 60% scoring it at this level after becoming aware of the programme details (Figure 12). In short, the key message appears to be that provided that people were fully informed as to the content of *Parklives*, the label of Coca-Cola is less of an issue.

**Figure 12. Appealing when aware of sponsor and aware of the initiative detail?**





## 4. Quantitative Data Summer 2014

Data have been collected to answer questions relating to key performance indicators (KPIs) and to aid in the development of the *Parklives* initiative moving into Year 2. Capture of data relating to *Parklives* participation was a significant challenge for session leaders (as is covered more extensively in the chapter relating to session leader feedback). For example a survey of *Parklives* instructors (n=13) indicated that in 40% of sessions less than 10% of participants had previously registered, indicating that in at least the cases identified, reported data are underestimates. Of the data received, a significant proportion were incomplete i.e. with data fields missing. A minimum number of fields were required to be complete before data was deemed suitable for inclusion in analysis, these were set as age, gender and postcode (the three fields required to determine unique attendance).

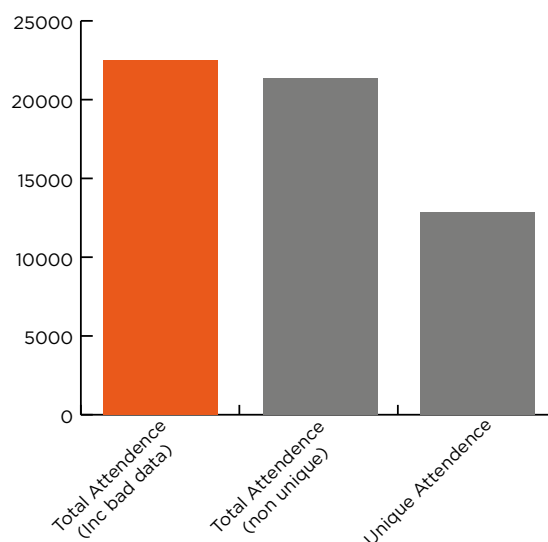
Data were collected from participants who were able to complete the registration process in the park. Data reported is therefore a self-selecting convenience sample as opposed to a representative or random sample. A key consideration in the evaluation of a convenience sample is that it may behave differently to a representative or random sample. It is also important to consider the random and systematic factors that might influence whether or not personal data were provided. For example a session leader running football classes may have registered every participant every session, whilst another leader running less formal dance sessions may not have had the opportunity. Data would therefore suggest that football is considerably more popular than dance, when in fact this may not be the case. Likewise, for a range of reasons ranging from peer pressure and cultural norms to the fear of loss of welfare income, participants might have been reluctant to enter even non-identifying personal data.

The above notwithstanding, a large volume of data were collected during the first summer of *Parklives*. Given this is the beginning of a seven year programme of activity, and that the data collection process will be enhanced moving into 2015 on the basis of learnings from 2014, this is promising. Data presented below provide an indication of general uptake and insight into who has engaged with *Parklives* during 2014. These data may aid in future operational decisions and contribute to a targeted within key demographics over the coming years.

### Attendance Figures

Total recorded attendance figures for the period of April-October 2015 were 22,495 (Figure 13). Those recording at least age, gender and postcode information fields totalled 21,336. Identified among these data were at least 12,860 unique attendees.

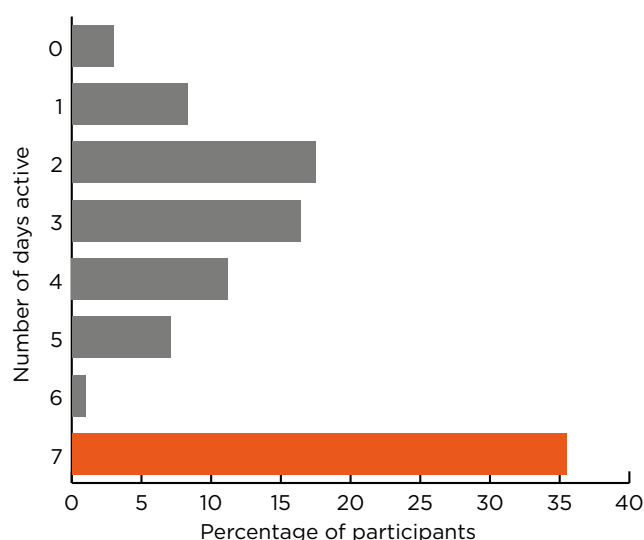
**Figure 13. Total recorded attendance figures**



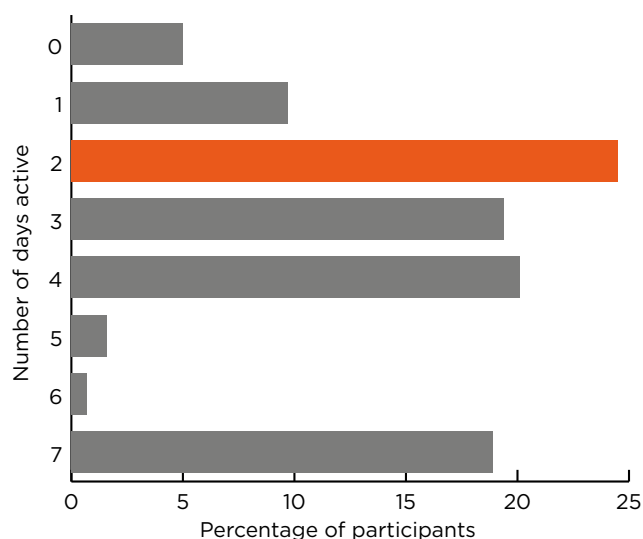
### Activity Levels

Participants were asked to report the number of times they were active for at least 30 minutes during the previous week. Data is presented as a total (Figure 14) and individually for Newham (Figure 15) and Newcastle (Figure 16). Please note this information was not collected in Birmingham.

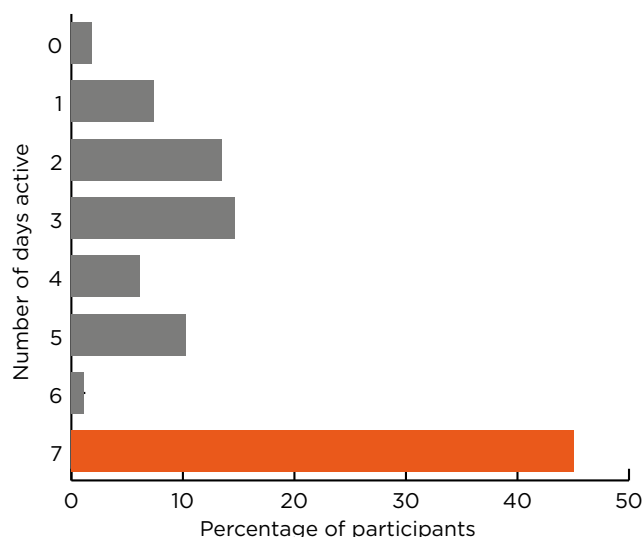
**Figure 14. Physical activity levels of Parklives participants - Total (n=2262)**



**Figure 15. Physical activity levels of Parklives participants – Newham (n=1330)**



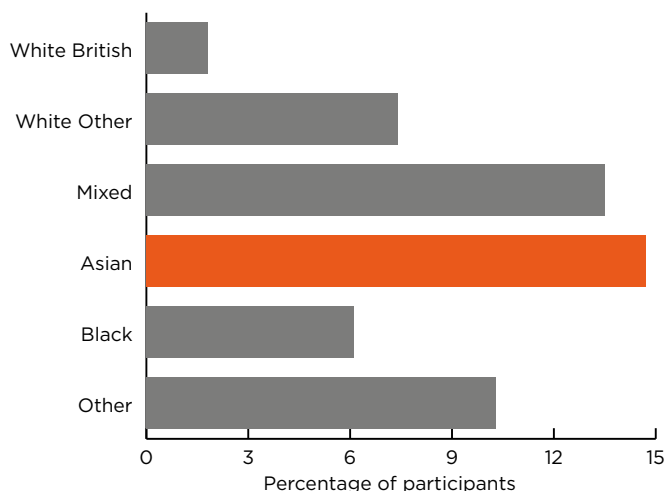
**Figure 16. Physical activity levels of Parklives participants – Newcastle (n=932)**



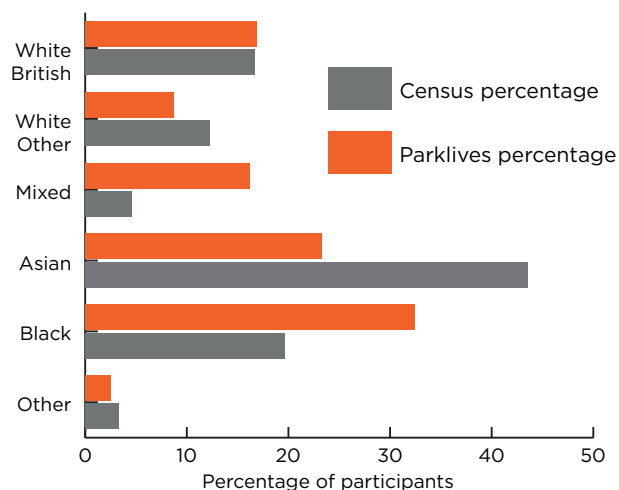
## Ethnicity

Participants provided their ethnicity upon registration. An open response was provided and subsequently coded by researchers. Data are presented as an overall snapshot (Figure 17) and separately alongside 2011 census data from each city / borough (Newham Figure 18, Newcastle Figure 19, Birmingham Figure 20).

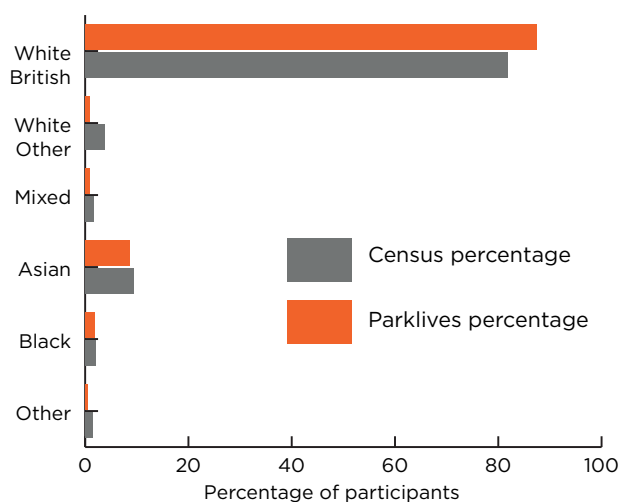
**Figure 17. Ethnicity of Parklives participants – Total**



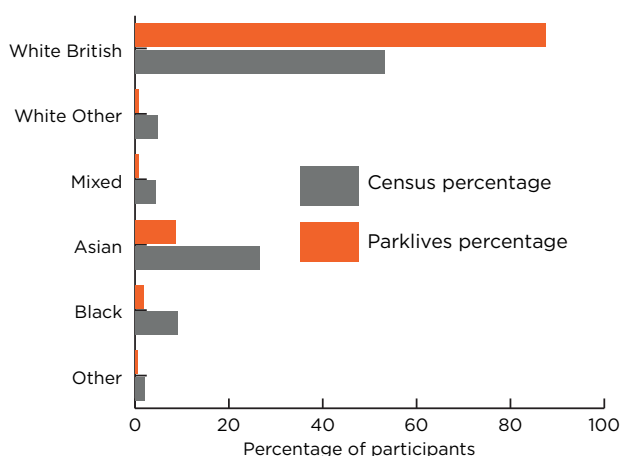
**Figure 18. Ethnicity of Parklives participants plotted against census data for Newham**



**Figure 19. Ethnicity of Parklives participants plotted against census data for Newcastle**



**Figure 20. Ethnicity of Parklives participants plotted against census data for Birmingham**



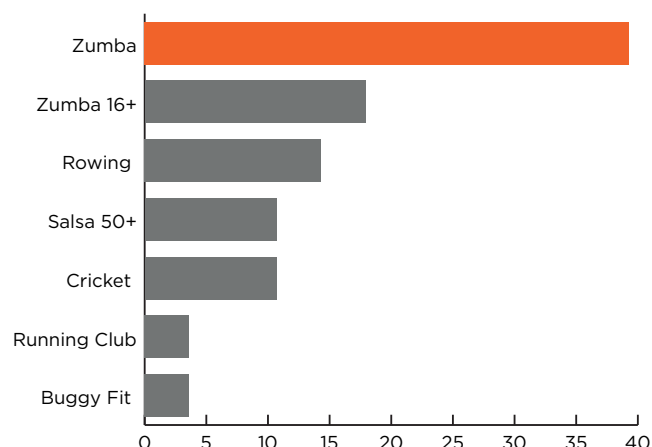
## Key Insights – Newham

The following data relates to the London Borough of Newham. Insight relating to the most popular activities generally, and for the most popular activities for the various target demographics specifically are reported. It is intended that the results be used to inform operational development of the *Parklives* initiative for Year 2.

### Inactive participants

Seven different activities were attended by people classed as inactive (Figure 21) (less than 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity over the previous week) with Zumba (39%) being the most popular session for this group of people.

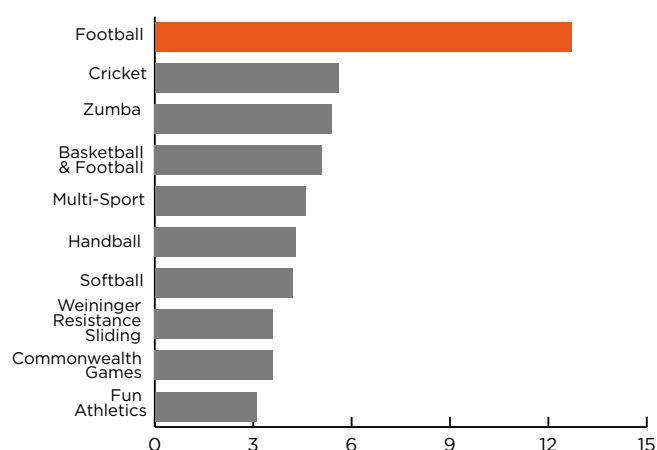
**Figure 21. Most popular activities for inactive participants - percentage of inactive participants attending activities**



## Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities

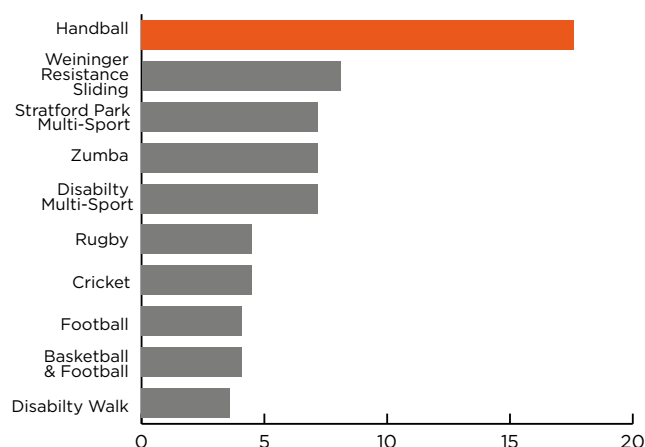
Of the top 10 activities attended by participants from BME communities, football was the most popular with 13% of this group attending at least once (Figure 22). A total of 56 different activities were attended by people from BME communities. Handball had the greatest levels of re-attendance (18%) (Figure 23). Of all people from BME communities who attended one session, 30% returned at least once.

**Figure 22. Most popular activities for BME community participants (percentage of BME participants attending activities)**





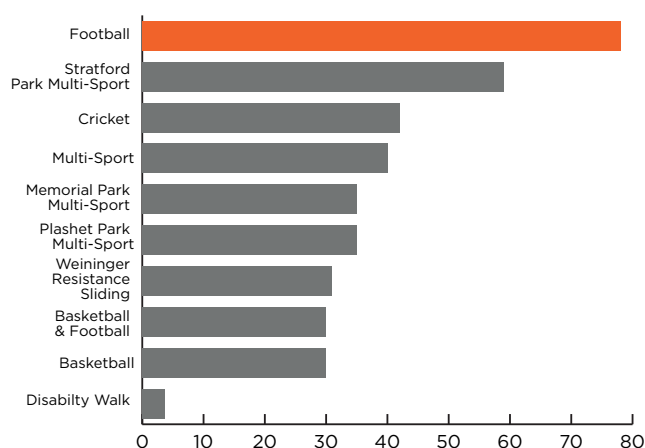
**Figure 23. Top activities for re-attendance amongst BME community participants (percentage of BME participants re-attending activities).**



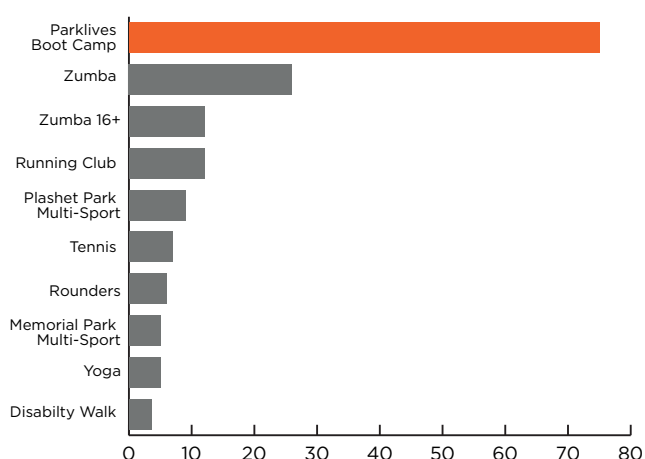
## Teens & Young Mums

The most popular and well attended activities for teens and young mums are presented in Figures 24 and 25. Data presented are total attendances at each activity.

**Figure 24. The most popular activities for teenagers based upon attendance levels**



**Figure 25. The most popular activities for young mums based upon attendance levels**

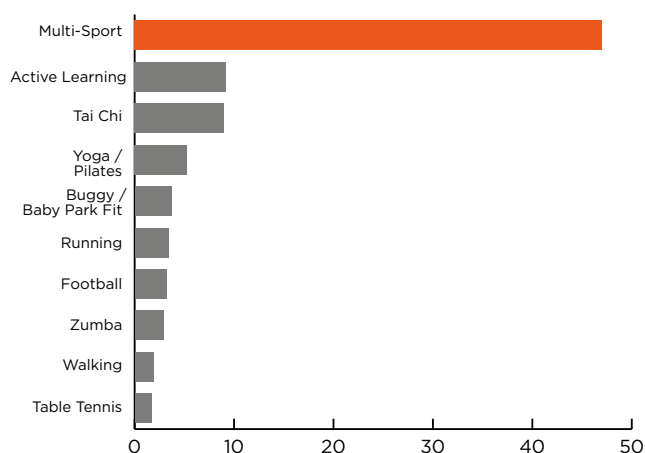


## Key Insights – Birmingham

The following data relates to the city of Birmingham. Insight relating to the most popular activities generally, and for the most popular activities for the various target demographics specifically are reported. It is intended that the results be used to inform operational development of the *Parklives* initiative for Year 2.

Data relating to inactivity levels were not collected in Birmingham. Of the top 10 activities attended by people from BME communities however, Tai Chi was the most popular with 10% of non-unique attendances by this group (Figure 26). A total of 33 different activities were attended by participants from BME communities.

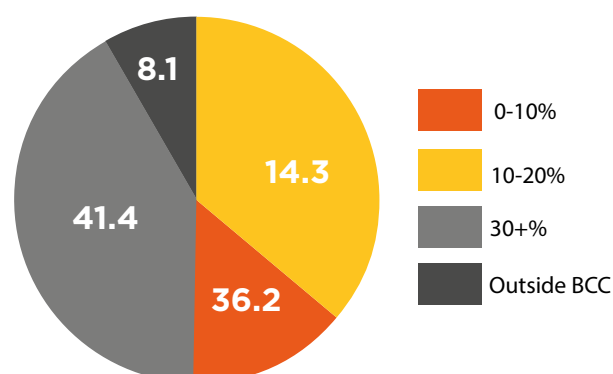
**Figure 26. Most popular activities for BME community participants - percentage of BME participants attending activities**



## Social Deprivation

IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) bands refer to how deprived the household is based on the Lower layer Super Output Area (LSOA) they live in, e.g. 0-10% means they live in the top 10% most deprived areas in England. The percentage of Parklives participants from each band is presented in Figure 27.

**Figure 27. Percentage of Birmingham Parklives participants from each IMD Band**



## Summary of 2014

Data were collected to answer questions relating to specific key performance indicators and to aid in the development of the Parklives initiative moving into Year 2. As above, it was reported that data capture was a significant challenge for session leaders, with many instances of data reported from less than 10% of participants at *Parklives* sessions. Of the data secured, a significant proportion was incomplete i.e. with data fields missing.

On the basis of lessons learned in 2014, the data collection process will be improved moving into 2015.

## Requirements for 2015

The evaluation advisory board was unanimous in its verdict of progress made in Year 1 and the requirements for Year 2, those are to confidently quantify:

- a) total attendances at each *Parklives* session, and
- b) total unique attendees in the *Parklives* programme.

In addition, there is a requirement for Birmingham City Council to collect 'deeper data' relating to whom, specifically, is taking part in sessions. This includes all of the data collected during Year 1 (gender, age, postcode, ethnicity, and PA levels) although it has been made clear that a repeat of the 'pen and paper' method of collecting data is no longer viable or acceptable. A solution is therefore required that allows demographical data to be collected and reported electronically in Birmingham only.

Finally it is important that CCGB is able to gather insight relating to wider community engagement. This will include perceptions of those attending *Parklives* sessions, use of parks, and physical activity levels. Data are required from all six participating cities in Year 2 and should be collected at two points during the year as a means of demonstrating impact. Stakeholders including local Public Health Directors and Public Health England also continue to pressure for local sales data indicating the impact of the programme on sales of Coca-Cola products.

However, there are significant challenges associated with data capture/collection. Early discussion with the Evaluation Committee centred around the need for *Parklives* to avoid a 'middle class intervention for middle class people'. That is, there is a strong likelihood that every stage of data capture – for example all participants being required to register online, to send an SMS or download a barcode onto their

smartphone – could represent a greater threat to inclusivity. Specifically, demographics that do not engage with the technologies in question for economic, cultural, accessibility or other reasons may be excluded. It was considered that these demographics are often those that have been excluded by previous campaigns. In short there are substantial tensions between the objective of *Parklives*, that is to provide an inclusive, fun and spontaneous programme of activity, and the understandable need on the part of CCGB and stakeholders to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of that programme.

## Strategy for 2015

To address each of the requirements detailed above, a three tiered strategy has been developed and is presented below:

### 1) Wider Community Engagement: Polling.

COMRES or an alternative polling agency will again be commissioned to conduct population level surveys across all participating cities and where applicable, control cities and cohorts. Surveys will be taken in May and August to reflect changes in attitude etc. across the summer. Data will contribute to within- and between-group data analyses, for example how feelings have changed within certain cities, a comparison between the cities, and comparison with control cities. This will be supplemented with informal polling by ukactive of local authority held databases as was the case in 2014.

### 2) Total & Unique Attendance: SMS solution.

An SMS solution will be developed that allows session leaders to simply report, via text message, how many people attended their session. Each text message will also include a code identifying the name of the session leader, park, and activity. This solution requires no input from participants and will address the need for accurate real time reporting of total and unique attendance. The accuracy of data reporting will be verified against mystery-shop visits and will be evaluated in real time. Thus an intervention can be planned in the instance of continual and significant differences between those numbers reported by the session leader, and those counted by the mystery shopper. It is also proposed that the same reporting method, that is a text message from the leader, will be used to assess how many attendees are attending their first *Parklives* session, this determined by a show of hands. This is a less verifiable approach and methods to ascertain unique first attendees are currently under discussion.

### 3) Demographical Data.

A robust technical solution for capturing data relating to *Parklives* participation is currently being developed between a third party technology provider and all local authorities. This is utilising a solution which is currently in place for Manchester City Council's 'Active Lifestyles' programme. Session leaders will each have tablet devices with participants provided NFC-based cards and fobs carrying their metadata (including demographical data) post-registration. The solution is planned to be rolled out by April 2016, with piloting in Birmingham and Manchester in summer 2015. One of the key drivers of this proposed system is Birmingham's need to capture 'deeper data' and the unsustainable resource required to continue capturing data via 'pen and paper' methods. In short, this will involve capturing very similar data to Year 1 (with the addition of activity levels), but electronically to negate the need to input paper forms into electronic spreadsheets manually. Real time data reporting and analysis can be provided, with a bespoke reporting suite developed for this tool. This data will also feed into the overall evaluation of Year 2 by providing more accurate reporting of the activity levels of *Parklives* participants and a breakdown of each session by demographic data, including age, gender, ethnicity and disability. Data will be able to be aggregated or disaggregated as required. The business case for investment in this solution by the local authorities is that it can be rolled out to wider programmes within each local authority and can be used to provide justification for wider investment in physical activity and public health programmes. The use of the solution will not just be limited to *Parklives* – however a specific *Parklives* application/module will be created.

### Key Points Year 1

- Under-reported participation as a result of registration process
- Self-selecting sample limits conclusions that can be drawn
- Key requirement to accurately capture unique and total attendances
- Solution: a three tiered approach.
  - Polling data
  - SMS solution across all cities
  - Development of a robust technological solution to be piloted in Year 2 and rolled out in Year 3



## 5. Qualitative Data Year 1

An operational review meeting was held with each of the participating local authorities. The aim of these sessions was to understand the operational realities of delivering the *Parklives* programme, discuss the successes at a local level, along with the challenges, associated opportunities.

The outcomes of these sessions, presented below, have helped to shape the planning and organisation of Year 2 – both at a local level (utilising specific outcomes in each area) and nationally (trends across each area reported more widely and to local authorities joining *Parklives* in Year 2).

The operational review was divided into eight key areas, and included key personnel from each area as part of the discussion. Key operational areas were defined as:

- Overall Engagement / Perception
- Sessions & Activities
- Branding / Kit & Equipment / Storage
- Session Leaders / Volunteers
- Data Collection / Digital
- Communications / Media / Promotion
- Quality Control

This was followed by a focus group containing session leaders (Birmingham n=24, Newham n=15, Newcastle n=19) who were asked to feedback on Year 1 success, Year 1 challenges, and Year 2 opportunities.

### Operational Review

#### Overall Engagement / Perception

Local authorities were, overall, pleased with the first years *Parklives* programme, especially in the context of the short time frames required to establish and deliver the programme and develop the digital and marketing / communication plan in Year 1.

There were challenges throughout, including recruiting participants, the management associated with the sheer volume of sessions undertaken, and limitations around the recording of data.

There was however a great deal of enthusiasm expressed, and an eagerness to build on the start made in Year 1 to deliver a better and more efficient programme in Year 2.

#### Sessions & Activities

A series of themes were present in discussions with all three local authorities. The localisation of the programme however was particularly strong, with a clear collective vision for the

programme and why it is important for local communities to take part required. Sessions are best when tailored to the local community, for example session timings need to adapt to the practical requirements of those who live close by to attend. Consultation is therefore continually required with local residents, employers, and community groups.

Other strategies that have the potential to influence participation rates include:

- Engaging with existing programmes e.g. Change4Life and Sure Start to ensure no duplication in programme delivery and that the programmes assimilate as efficiently as possible
- Ensuring *Parklives* becomes part of the broader physical activity offering within each local authority
- Designing innovative sessions that build upon the existing core base of activities e.g. variations on golf, treasure hunts, and music based activities. This may encourage more participants, and be particularly appealing for teens
- Working with park based business owners in a wider sense than promotion e.g. managing boxes of equipment that people can pick up, play with, and return
- The linking of *Parklives* sessions with other sporting / activity sessions in local areas

Barriers to, and issues that influenced, participation were also identified. In some instances the complexity of the number of sessions being offered resulted in a lack of consistency, with changes to the days, times, and locations of sessions happening on a weekly basis. A clear and consistent timetable is required to enable regular repeat attendance and better sign posting toward activities.

Further, barriers exist that limit the likelihood of participants (and session leaders) entering parks, for example distance from local housing, fear of crime, large groups of young people. Steps can be taken to ensure parks are more accessible, and strategies such as arranging for meeting locations to be outside of the park gates so that participants can walk in together may help limit some issues.

There is also a balance required between targeting those parks that will drive maximal participation rates i.e. those with the highest footfall and accessibility, and those in areas of high social deprivation, as in many instances these are not the same.

## Branding / Kit & Equipment / Storage

Interestingly one of the major requests in terms of equipment for Year 2 was the provision of tea and coffee flasks that would enable refreshments to be provided after sessions have finished and facilitate conversations between participants. Where this had been possible during Year 1 anecdotal reports suggest that re-attendance was higher and engagement more consistent.

Further, it was suggested widely that furniture already placed in the parks could, and should, provide promotional and communication opportunities e.g. notice boards. This could be expanded to create '*Parklives Zones*' that act as obvious meeting points or focal areas for participants and session leaders.

## Session Leaders / Volunteers

It was reported in one local authority that recruiting session leaders / volunteers can be a challenge as a result of the time they are ideally required, that is during the middle of the day. By engaging with new session leaders and volunteers (and providing training) it was possible to keep skills within the local communities and in many instances allow those not in education, employment, or training (NEETs) to develop skills and gather working experience that has the potential to lead to future employment.

It is however important to begin to understand barriers to volunteering and expanding upon the diversity of the volunteer base to better reflect the local communities (where applicable). Moving into Year 2 session leaders will be encouraged to meet with local community clubs and groups to provide information on *Parklives* sessions and provide them with timetables for their local parks. Again, the capture of qualitative data might be especially useful here.

Session leaders do however have loyal following from other class / activity settings and as such can act as points of contact for wider promotional work, for example encouraging regular participants to bring friends and family to these free sessions as a way of stimulating future engagement with physical activity. In fact it was suggested across all three local authorities that the trustworthiness of session leaders is an influencing factor in the engagement of all participants, but especially children and older participants.

## Digital / Data Collection

The number one operational challenge from Year 1 was the use of pen and paper data capture techniques to monitor both attendance at sessions and demographical information

relating the participant themselves. The registration process including demographical information resulted in an under-reporting of total attendance as a consequence of participants not wanting to complete all of the information and/or session leaders / local authorities not having the opportunity, time, or resource to collate all paper forms into electronic spread-sheets for transfer to the evaluation team.

The exception to this was Birmingham City Council who were able to recourse a team to input all data and provide on-going analysis. This approach is however not sustainable and a more efficient solution is required, that still captures information including; gender, age, postcode and ethnicity, all of which are required by the public health team.

On top of this however there is a fundamental requirement to be able to accurately report the total number of attendances at *Parklives* sessions, and total unique participants attending a) in each local authority, and b) across the whole of the country.

The solution to this problem is however a challenging one and one discussed at length across physical activity promotion. The park setting of activity sessions adds to the difficulty of this solution, for example, in two of the local authorities participating in Year 1 the focus group indicated that session leaders would not feel comfortable using tablets / smartphones within the park due to concerns relating to crime and safety.

An initial hope, in collecting this data, was that participants would register online and book onto activities, thus providing demographical information (as part of registration) and specifically which activity they will complete. There were however very few online registrations. It has been suggested that incentivising this process will help, although one must consider the ability of many participants to access online registration.

## Communications / Media / Promotion

The communication of *Parklives*, and the promotion surrounding it, was distributed across each of the three local authorities. Operationally however it was felt that a higher degree of localisation within the promotion would have generated greater impact at a community level. It was suggested that for brought media to be most effective it must be accompanied by local conversation, which is word of mouth / face to face contact time, and targeted at specific communities rather than generic promotion of the initiative. Specifically this would involve

leafleting, letters, and posters for communities highlighting specifically what is happening in their parks. Effective outlets for this information may include local newspapers, newsletters, church groups, cafes, and community notice boards.

## Session Leader Focus Group

Session Leaders themselves were included in regional focus groups and asked to discuss the success of Year 1, the challenges, and opportunities for Year 2. Outcomes are presented below.

### Overall

The biggest and overarching success of Year 1 was the creation and roll out of a new, potentially high impact, programme in a short period of time.

Work within the local communities has been successful and strong partnerships have developed between the Local Authorities, Coca-Cola, Councils, and Governing Bodies (e.g. Lawn Tennis Association).

The parks themselves provided a wonderful and different environment for activity. It also encouraged people to move between activities more regularly, for example, those attending yoga would stay to attend Zumba.

### Promotion

The promotion, and consequent awareness, of the initiative was positive in many areas.

### Session Leaders

The enthusiasm and positivity of the session leaders has been significant in creating a demand for activities and driving participation. It was concluded that the current session leaders are the right people to engage with young people and keep them coming back. This is epitomised in their ability to adapt activities to different age ranges and abilities.

*Parklives* gave session leaders the opportunity to work with new people and share / learn skills from the coaching communities: “*Parklives* got me back into coaching, having been out of the industry for several years”

### Sessions/Activities/Participants/

#### Kit & Equipment

The fact that activities are free has opened them up to the whole community. Being outdoors, based around having fun, and inclusive for families and different age ranges, are huge positives for the initiative

The range of activities offered has helped to engage those who would not normally

participate in structured physical activity sessions, whilst maintaining an offering for those who already enjoy activity. In addition it gave people the opportunity to try things for the first time with no obligation to make any financial commitment or book in for regular sessions.

There have been some fantastic success stories, including those attending a beginners running group going on to complete the Great North Run, Active Push (pushchair based exercise classes for new mums) reducing the feelings of isolation that can occur with a new-born, and ‘Lads & Dads’ football running through the summer independent of a session leader as a result of local ownership.

The professional look of the kit and equipment has contributed to a positive external perception of the programme, and increased the confidence with which participants attend the sessions.

The popularity of the programme increased over the summer e.g. Boot Camp in Newham began with 2 participants and ended with 35 regular attendees.

*“A specific disability orientated programmes created a safe environment for parents to leave young adults to take part in activities, something not previously available”*

## Challenges

Awareness of *Parklives* in some areas is still relatively low, despite substantial marketing; there is a challenge to moving deeper into communities. The limited lead-in time to Year 1 made extensive planning difficult. There is potential to develop a better promotional plan, with a greater individual community focus. Participation rates may not be reaching potential as a result of not being able to reach those not exposed to traditional media outlets. Further, during the first year there was no formal process for recording case studies, with session leaders having been told some interesting stories but not been aware of a process to report these.

### Sessions/Activities/Participants/ Kit & Equipment

The lack of time to develop and form relationships with new groups / projects / community groups limited wider community engagement.

Understanding at which level to set structured activity was a challenge i.e. in many instances a core group advanced each week, whilst there were new participants joining each week.



Infrastructure issues limited the ease of access and enjoyment of participation in some instances. Car parking is limited around many parks which created challenges for session leaders who needed to bring equipment and temporary branding, and participants who did not live locally. There are also innate issues working in parks, for example a lack of toilet facilities and availability of refreshments.

### **Website/Registration**

Encouraging people to register online for sessions proved very challenging, and as a consequence there was a consistent need to register participants on paper forms within the park. This ultimately led to under-reporting and incomplete information in many instances. Paper forms were reported to be time consuming and containing too many fields. Session leaders themselves were only interested in name, date of birth, and any health conditions. Session leaders suggested that the lack of perceived benefit or incentive to register online limited uptake.

### **Public perception of Coca-Cola**

It is important from an evaluation point of view to explore to what extent the programme has changed peoples' opinions of Coca-Cola, positively or even negatively. Irrespective of the fact that CCGB have stated that this is not what the programme is about, this is something that the evaluation team may assess in future years.

## **Opportunities**

Pre-timetabling of activities will help add structure to delivery and give families the opportunity to plan what they would like to attend. This will be based upon data collected in Year 1 and should include consultation with local families.

Sessions could include sign-posting to local facilities as clear pathways for those participants who would like to develop skills further than is feasible in *Parklives* sessions.

There is an opportunity to make more of the uniqueness of the *Parklives* programme within marketing and promotion, for example that it is free, hosted in parks, and focused on family engagement.

### **Promotion**

It is important to utilise local awareness channels such as community and park notice boards to spread awareness of the programme and of activity timetables.

More tangible promotional materials such as printed hand-outs with activity timetables will aid in signposting potential participants toward activities.

Promotional materials could feature inspirational stories captured in Year 1 and continually during Year 2.

### **Website/Registration**

A paperless solution for registration of participants and a simpler way of recording total attendance, and unique participant numbers.

## 6. Public / Private Public Health Partnership

Initial engagement between CCGB and local authorities was not easy. Co-operation between commercial bodies and local authorities / public health teams is a complicated area and there is a general sense of caution, especially with companies such as CCGB. This engagement and subsequent negotiations occurred during January 2014 at the same time as anti-sugar campaigns were gathering real momentum, often with Coca-Cola as the 'poster child'. This contributed to powerful blocks in some instances from Public Health teams, who strongly discouraged any partnership between their local authority and CCGB.

Introductions were however facilitated through CCGB's partnership with Street Games, a national sports charity that provides sports and volunteering opportunities to young people in disadvantaged communities across the UK, and in which the notion of partnership with local authorities to provide funding and support for community based activity was originally discussed.

The complexity of local authority structures was however recognised early in this process, especially the way in which inter-departmental funding streams overlap in some areas, but are independent in others, presenting a challenging environment for somebody wishing to provide support for a programme that includes multiple departments both within delivery, and as key stakeholders.

Clarity of aims was required to ensure that both CCGB and all respective departments within local authorities were aware of what was to be offered and importantly who they were going to be offered to e.g. the demographics to be targeted, in this instance areas of high deprivation and inactive populations.

All local authorities involved in *Parklives* Year 1, and CCGB have however subsequently acknowledged that political support is what has ultimately driven participation in *Parklives*, contributed to by senior officers within the respective authorities. Political sensitivities were relaxed as a result of a realisation that engaging with the commercial / private sector may ultimately provide substantial benefit and resource, and political support was gained if substantial value could be demonstrated, that is the value of the partnership is sufficient to make a difference within local communities.

Public Health teams were however not so confident in the ultimate outcomes and aims of the initiative, and in one instance advised against engagement with Coca-Cola. In another instance however Public Health presented no objection at all, although this

was strongly influenced by the fact that it was Coca-Cola Zero and not traditional 'red' coke as the partnering brand. It was specified by Birmingham's Public Health team that rigorous data collection be completed to understand who was attending sessions and influence the ability to target cohorts where required.

Ultimately finance is a powerful driver in such conversations, not only providing resources for physical activity programmes, but quite possibly 'propping-up jobs' in local authorities. Providing nearly 3000 free physical activity sessions over a complete summer, in 60 parks across the country is a very difficult and expensive thing to do. Further, the risk to benefit ratio within one particular local authority was considered, and it was decided that the ability to provide these sessions for the local community was a sufficient driver to overcome internal objection.

An aligning of priorities and focus has ultimately led to a positive working relationship between Coca-Cola and the respective Local Authorities.

Areas of tension have tended to centre on the limited timeline to initiate a programme of activities, but have ultimately been managed via weekly calls and meetings between all respective partners and agencies to ensure that issues are dealt with quickly and communication remains in place during periods of high activity.

There is no doubt that an overall sense of positivity has emerged between CCGB, the Local Authorities, and the activity providers, built on the fact that everybody believes in what they are doing. At each of the focus groups and review sessions, despite open and often frank exchanges of opinion relating to operational matters, the conversation would generally finish with positive case studies and stories of success within local communities. Once again however, a wide range of factors from health benefits to financial factors might explain any or all of these.

There is now significant internal focus upon the sustainability of the programme post Coca-Cola funding. Examples in Year 1 have included the up-skilling of staff (session leaders and coaches) and engagement with community groups' for example Friends of Parks. Such links will continue to be explored moving into Year 2.

In summary, the overarching theme to all discussions was that public/private relationships have the ability to produce real change, where there are common objectives, something both Coca-Cola and the Local Authorities acknowledge they are wary of, but consider themselves to be aligned on moving into Year 2.



More people  
More active  
More often

RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Evaluation Committee is independent and advises the ukactive Research Institute on all issues related to the evaluation of the ParkLives programme. Membership on this committee is an honorary position.

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