



CLUB SUCCESS STORY

STATS THAT TELL A STORY:

How Atlantic Racquet Centre is measuring positive social impact

Atlantic Racquet Centre (ARC) in Bideford, North Devon, is a modern volunteer-led community business and charity community racquet and fitness centre where everyone can exercise, socialise and learn together. The centre offers memberships and coaching across 10 tennis courts, three badminton courts, two table tennis tables and squash courts, plus a gym and a community café.

ARC has a clear mission: To provide affordable opportunities for all people in Torrridge to improve their health and wellbeing by **exercising, socialising and developing new skills** (E, S & DS). Their approach and impressive results are explained here.

LAUNCHING THE MISSION: PROJECT INPUTS

In 2015, ARC secured capital funding to complete their facilities and started to expand their marketing reach within Torrridge. They also provided specific training to staff and volunteers on how to ensure participants would make improvements in exercising, socialising and developing new skills.





INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES: PROJECT OUTPUTS

- Outreach sessions in local primary, secondary and SEN schools to provide opportunities for E, S & DS to children in Torrridge
- Free and varied community open days and events to provide E, S & DS opportunities for people of all ages
- Affordable weekly coaching sessions for all ages and abilities including disability-specific sessions to provide opportunities for E, S & DS
- Affordable membership programme including multiple weekly opportunities for E & S (e.g. fitness competitions, No Strings Badminton)
- Affordable facility hire offer providing opportunities for E, S & DS

As well as investing in the local community, all initiatives helped grow the centre's customer base.



MEASURING IMPACT

The centre explains that “whilst the staff and volunteers involved felt our impact was a positive one, we didn't yet have any data or baseline to measure this from.” As a result, they used three distinct methods to monitor social impact: participant arrival & departure wellness monitoring, a participant health & wellbeing survey, and development progress tracking.

Participant arrival & departure wellness monitoring was executed using Lego bricks and jars marked with a sliding scale of sad to happy faces. Participants were asked ‘How are you feeling?’ upon arrival at the centre and again when leaving after their activity. Over 600 participants opted to take part over one week, providing quantitative and qualitative data.

The participant health & wellbeing survey gave people the opportunity to rank their progress since joining the centre across a number of areas including frequency of exercise, social confidence and skill acquisition/development. 91 participants took part over two weeks.

Development progress tracking is still underway. The goal is to provide detailed tracking on skill acquisition and competency progress in both racquet coaching and gym and fitness coaching. Baseline data has been captured and will be monitored over a six-month period.



OUTCOMES

ARC have identified the desired short and long-term outcomes for participants of all ages and abilities. In the short-term, they hope to see improved:

- Racquet skills and physical fitness and strength
- Mental and physical health and wellbeing
- Social skills and confidence.

In the long-term, they are looking for evidence of an:

- Increase in number of people of all ages and abilities taking part in regular exercise in Torrridge
- Reduction in loneliness and social isolation amongst people of all ages and abilities in Torrridge.

84%
OF PEOPLE
LEFT THE CENTRE FEELING
HAPPY



SOCIAL IMPACT: THE RESULTS

Arrival & departure wellness monitoring revealed that **84% of people left the centre feeling happy or very happy, with 68% of people feeling happy or very happy when they arrived.** Anecdotally, staff and volunteers noticed that the wellness monitoring prompted more conversations about wellbeing and led to more participants talking about their feelings – a really pleasing outcome.

The health & wellbeing survey showed that:

- **70% of respondents** felt their strength & fitness had improved since joining ARC
- **57% of respondents** reported a social confidence of 7/10 or higher before joining ARC with 86% reporting the same level after joining ARC
- **89% of racquet playing respondents** felt their skills had improved since joining ARC
- **54% of respondents** reported to be exercising more often since joining ARC

ALWAYS IMPROVING

It's evident that ARC have established clear, manageable and successful mechanisms for monitoring the centre's social impact. They plan to repeat the process on a six-monthly basis moving forwards to ensure their efforts continue to have a positive impact on the community through exercising, socialising and developing new skills.



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LTA, The National Tennis Centre
100 Priory Lane, Roehampton
London SW15 5JQ

T: 020 8487 7000
E: info@lta.org.uk
www.lta.org.uk

 @the_LTA

 LTA

 @LTA

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When asked to describe the impact that ARC has on health & wellbeing, the positivity was overwhelming! Here are just a few snippets of many responses:

“

ARC has given me a place to make friends and improve. The community has given me so many opportunities to become fitter and healthier.”

“

Learning tennis has had an amazing impact on my physical fitness, social confidence and mental health. I have a stressful job and was a key worker during the pandemic which caused me much anxiety. Learning a new skill in a supportive and social environment has helped me shake that off and move forward mentally.”

“

Being a volunteer at ARC has made me feel I am contributing to the community.”

“

It's given me something to look forward to doing and meeting new people. I feel better after I play badminton and feel happier!”