

Active Lancashire Limited – Company Number: 06859894

Overview: Active Lancashire Limited's (formally called Lancashire Sport Partnership) company objects are to promote community participation in healthy recreation for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area (Lancashire) and surrounding area and in particular to provide, or to assist in providing, and to promote:

- public facilities, amenities, equipment and services for healthy recreation;
- facilities and services for recreational, sporting or other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare for the public at large or those who by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances, have need of such facilities and services;
- the improvement and preservation of good health and well-being through participation in healthy recreation;
- education, training and coaching courses which promote physical health and fitness.
- support and assistance for residents in deprived neighbourhoods and / or social housing areas who are at risk of social exclusion to improve their social and employment prospects through sporting, environmental and other activities working with partners and other relevant organisations as deemed appropriate.

Company Type: Private Company limited by guarantee. It is also a registered charity.

Lancashire County Council Ownership: Lancashire County Council is the sole member of Active Lancashire Limited so therefore owns 100% of the company and is registered as the "person with significant control" within the definition of the Companies Act 2006.

2023/24 Update to 31 March 2023

Active Lancashire has continued to grow (33% increase in turnover in 2022/23 on previous year) but is now consolidating its projects and activities ahead of the loss of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) funding from December 2023 (over 60% of total current income) and preparing the step down to UK Shared Prosperity Funding. Its team and projects are performing well and partnership delivery networks continue to develop their confidence and capability to support Lancashire's residents, particularly those from a deprived background, to get physically active, with a focus on improving their health and economic status. The organisation has been audited for its Governance standards (BDO Auditors in July 2022) and Financial and control systems (Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) / ESIF) and been found to be operating at a high level. In terms of leadership relationships with key stakeholders and operationally, standards, quality and relationships with funders and partners remain strong, with the organisation being recognised as a valuable strategic partner rather than local delivery body.

The organisation is in year two of the Active Lancashire's 10-year strategy “#A Decade of Movement”, where the company will make a significant contribution to the pandemic recovery, with a focus on young people, working age adults and those experiencing mental and physical health challenges. Over the past 12 months, the staff team has remained steady at around 60, with relatively low levels of turnover. Support to clubs, coaches and volunteers remains strong through a range of measures and initiatives including training, small grants (Together Fund) and developmental activity, including through our charity shop based in the Accrington Mall. Active Lancashire continues to support schools and young people through the company's safeguarding work and its SPAR Lancashire School Games (SPAR sponsorship deal for the 17th year in succession) which engages up to 8,000 young people annually. Active Lancashire looks forward to its County School Games event on the 4 July 2023 at Stanley Park, Blackpool.

Active Lancashire continues to develop its workplace health project: Business Health Matters (BHM) which offers Workplace Health Champion training and on site mental and physical health checks with social prescribing. After nearly 18 months of testing and learning, training over 500 L2 and L3 Workplace Health champions (ESIF funded) and nearly 600 Workplace health checks. Progress on achieving numbers has been considerably below projected targets which reflects the adverse trading experience for many Lancashire businesses, however funders are satisfied with progress to date. Research finds that the customer experience for the Health Champion training and Health checks is positive, with over 95% saying that they "would recommend to a friend" and with the majority of individuals accessing opportunities to improve their health self-care. The key issues stated for Businesses not engaging with the services are cost of the healthcheck (£60) and secondly time commitments for releasing staff (1 day for the L2 course and 3 days for the L3 course). It is interesting to note that the Lancashire Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) research carried out with over 800 businesses identified Health and Wellbeing of staff being a key skills gap for employees; Active Lancashire is reassured that there is an ongoing market need for the service. The capability developed through BHM is being considered by Commissioners to augment the delivery of Community Health checks.

Active Lancashire continues to develop its More Positive Together (MPT) programme with District Authorities, housing providers and VCFSE partners to support people further away from the labour market with complex needs to access opportunities to develop their confidence and skills through physical activity, volunteering etc. MPT and the Steps project for younger people has supported over 8000 people over the past 6 years to improve their resilience and capability to maintain positive lifestyle choices and move back towards productive and working lives. Although at considerable risk of a significant loss in capacity through the loss of ESIF, the project has been mainstreamed in a reduced form by a number of partners and will continue in a number of areas through UKSPF from January 2024, with the potential for medium and longer term funding options being considered.

Active Lancashire has through 2022/23 extended its services offered through the Recovery team (Challenge through Sport Initiative – CSI) and community and young people's services, where it has undertaken some innovative practice with people in secure Mental Health treatment centres, worked with Madrassas and provided services to support people within Prisons and into the communities.

Over the coming 2023/24 period Active Lancashire will focus on stabilising services, working towards the end of ESIF funding and building a portfolio of commercial and health offerings. Anticipated turnover in 2023/24 will be £5.2M. The true impact of the loss of ESIF funding will be felt in 2024/25 where the UKSPF provision with Authorities will be reduced to around 9 of the 14 Authority areas with a consequent impact on the consistency and availability of provision to Lancashire communities; There is a critical risk in employability support for the most deprived communities with complex health challenges and also to employers seeking to retain their employees with ongoing health conditions.

Financial Performance

The following is a forecast position for the 2022/23 Financial Year.

The income for the financial year 2022/23 will be £6.8m (33% increase on the prior year) with an unrestricted reserves surplus in the year of circa £35,000 therefore increasing unrestricted reserves held to £494,000 in line with the reserves policy.

The company also provides various grants that have been paid to schools, libraries and community groups through the opening schools facilities and the tackling inequalities funding.

The organisation has been subject to two major funding audits during the year.

An audit commissioned by Sport England and undertaken by BDO Accountancy and Audit in June-August 2022 assessed the financial management and governance of Active Lancashire as GOOD with outstanding features.

A DWP audit of one of the ESF funded projects in March 2023 was completed with no issues raised.

Conclusions relating to going concern status: No status issues raised by the company auditors.

Lancashire County Council Directors on the Board: 3 County Councillors – Michael Green, Rob Bailey and Scott Smith.

Company Contact Details: Adrian Leather, Chief Executive Officer, Active Lancashire Limited, Tel: 01772 299830, Email: aleather@activelancashire.org.uk