



Northumberland County Council

Community Sports Coach (CSC) Proposal – Northumberland PlayZones Partnership

Submitted by:

Northumberland County Council – Sports Development Team

In partnership with the Football Foundation PlayZones Programme

1. Strategic Context

Northumberland County Council (NCC) is delivering a countywide network of PlayZones in partnership with the Football Foundation to provide high-quality, accessible, and inclusive spaces for sport and physical activity. Eight PlayZones have been identified across the county, with six forming a strong cluster in the south, east & central areas: **Ashington, Newbiggin, Amble, Alnwick, Choppington, and West Bedlington.**

To support the strategic growth and sustainability of PlayZones, NCC has:

- appointed a **Strategic Lead for PlayZones**, providing overarching coordination, partnership management, and governance;
- secured funding for a **PlayZone Activator**, who will support local capacity building through **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)**, assisting community groups to access and use the facilities.
- engaged **StreetGames** as a strategic partner to support the development and sustainability of PlayZones through community engagement, partnership coordination, and insight-led practice
- identified a specialist fitness provider in **Places Leisure** to coordinate fitness provision across PlayZones (**not currently funded**)

This proposal introduces a complementary position: a **Community Sports Coach (CSC)**, to deliver structured, multi-sport activity across designated PlayZones. The CSC will provide direct delivery that addresses identified gaps in provision and enhances the outcomes set out within each site's Football Foundation project plan.



2. Proposal Overview

The **Community Sports Coach** will provide targeted, high-quality multi-sport sessions across six PlayZones, responding to local community demand and ensuring that each site realises its potential as a sustainable, inclusive, and well-used facility.

The role will:

- Deliver **regular structured activity sessions** (multi-sport and age-appropriate) tailored to local priorities;
- **Activate underused periods** (weekday evenings, weekends, school holidays) to maximise community access;
- Offer **entry-level sport opportunities** for groups currently underrepresented in sport and physical activity, including women and girls, disabled people, and inactive adults;
- **Bridge the gap** between community interest and long-term delivery by establishing pathways to community-led activity; and
- Work collaboratively with the PlayZone Activator and Strategic Lead to align delivery, share learning, and measure impact;
- Support workforce development for coaches, volunteers, and community leaders across PlayZones;
- Play a positive role in county-wide coordination and the sharing of good practice across all Northumberland PlayZones;
- Support the marketing and promotion of PlayZones to increase awareness, participation, and community engagement;

3. Employment and Delivery Model

- The CSC will be **employed by Northumberland County Council** within the **Sports Development Team**.
- The focus will be **multi-sport**, reflecting the breadth of community interest identified through engagement, and delivering against Football Foundation priorities.
- The role will provide approximately **30–37 hours per week**, spread across participating PlayZone sites,

- NCC will provide **management, supervision, and quality assurance**, ensuring safeguarding, inclusion, and alignment with local PlayZone project plans.
- **Contract:** 12-month fixed-term, commencing late March;

4. Funding Proposal

To enable the creation of this shared delivery post, NCC proposes the following funding model:

Partner Sites	Contribution per Site	Duration	NCC Contribution
Ashington, Newbiggin, Amble, Alnwick, Choppington, West Bedlington	£7,000	12 months	NCC to contribute via Ashington's allocation and through management and coordination support

This collective funding will cover employment costs, travel between sites, session delivery, monitoring, and evaluation – ***Note** this will not include facility costs for session delivery, this can be explored per site.

5. Expected Outcomes and Impact

The CSC role will strengthen the overall PlayZone offer and contribute to the Football Foundation's core outcomes of **participation, sustainability, and community engagement**.

Key expected impacts include:

- Increased **usage and participation** across all age groups and demographics;
- Development of **new community activity sessions**, leagues, and casual play opportunities;
- Greater **inclusion** of women and girls, disabled people, and socially isolated individuals;
- Improved **community confidence** in using and managing the facilities;
- Enhanced **partnership working** between town & parish councils, development trusts, clubs, schools, and voluntary organisations; and
- Evidence of **positive social outcomes**, including wellbeing improvement and reduction in antisocial behaviour.

Monitoring and evaluation will align with each PlayZone's existing project plan, coordinated through the site operators and Clubspark, supported by NCC Sports Development Team and reported to the Football Foundation.

6. Local Site Summaries

Newbiggin – Newbiggin Town Council / AFC Newbiggin

Consultation showed demand for football, fitness, tennis, basketball, and netball, with interest strongest at weekends and during school holidays. Residents also requested additional seating and informal spectator areas. **CSC focus:** Provide regular small-sided football, family activity, and introductory netball/basketball sessions; support the establishment of local recreational football; and coordinate with AFC Newbiggin to link community sessions with club pathways.

7. Governance and Partnership

Northumberland County Council will:

- Employ, manage, and supervise the CSC;
- Coordinate site delivery schedules and quality assurance;
- Oversee safeguarding, monitoring, and impact reporting;
- Maintain strategic alignment with the PlayZones Activator and Strategic Lead roles.

Local PlayZone Operators will:

- Contribute the agreed financial amount;
- Provide facility access and local community insight;
- Support marketing, communications, and local engagement; and
- Participate in review and planning meetings to ensure delivery meets community needs.

8. Conclusion

The introduction of a shared **Community Sports Coach** represents a strategic and collaborative approach to activating Northumberland's PlayZones. Through direct delivery and targeted engagement, the role will ensure consistent, high-quality community sport opportunities across multiple sites, complementing the work of the PlayZone Activator and strengthening local partnerships.

By co-funding this position, participating PlayZone operators will contribute to a coordinated, inclusive, and sustainable model that maximises community benefit and ensures the long-term success of the Football Foundation PlayZones programme across Northumberland.
