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Breaking Boundaries – Further Emerging Findings

This report provides an overview of the monitoring and evaluation of the Breaking Boundaries programme as it continues to emerge from the suspension of its activity delivery due the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is based on desk review of progress reports produced by Cities, Sporting Equals, and YST; City implementation plans, interviews with project staff and delivery partners and participants involved in programme delivery. It aims to share insights and learning from activities conducted since September 2021 to demonstrate the programmes' delivery return. It highlights key practice that ought to underpin the ongoing development of partnerships with targeted community organisations and focused work with key community groups Breaking Boundaries is taking forward in its final year of delivery. It also summarises progress against the key programme outcomes.

Context

Breaking Boundaries Programme

In February 2021, it was announced that following further extension of the Government's furlough scheme that the Breaking Boundaries programme would face a further postponement of its delivery until 30th April 2021. From the 1st May 2021 staff in City teams resumed some activity that sought to map the readiness of local community groups to resume their engagement. Final extensions of local level Covid-19 restrictions meant that resumption of Breaking Boundaries activities was further rescheduled for 21st June 2021 with City staff teams returning to roles from the 1st June 2021 to prepare for the resumption. This meant that set up activities for programme delivery from September 2021 were curtailed and to support planning of implementation plans for this period the mapping exercise was to provide important insight to help shape the way Breaking Boundaries moved forward as it began its third year of delivery.

The mapping exercise results highlighted key issues including:

- that there were variations in the readiness of community groups to reengage with the programme
- that some staff remained unavailable or were reallocated to other responsibilities around community resilience or other welfare/wellbeing issues
- there were issues around the varying levels of anxiety amongst and within participant groups, about a return to face-to-face delivery as the sole means of delivery.

In response, City teams sought to develop hybrid forms of delivery that combined online and face to face delivery if possible. Following the return of City team staff, some limited Breaking

Boundaries activities resumed in Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester, and Slough between September and December 2021. Due to delays in return to work of staff[1] in Barking and Dagenham activities for Breaking Boundaries could not be set up although engagement with community groups and set up of the first City Leadership Forum (CLF) did take place,

The programme also pivoted in response to these challenges to seek a more targeted approach with Coordinators tasked with identifying community organisations that could be paired to review local cohesion issues. To support implementation of findings from Year 2 evaluation work Cities were encouraged to identify ways in which they could identify new working relationships with community groups the programme had done less work with, including Black African and Caribbean groups, moves to bring different religious groups together, and develop relationships with community organisations the programme had yet to work with. To facilitate this programme development, it was agreed that three CLFs would be scheduled in each City between September 2021 and January 2022.

The forums aimed to identify specific community groups that would be engaged by planned activities who would then co-design activities to address the identified cohesion issues. It was expected that the forums would identify a more limited programme of activities which were focussed more on creating experiences and project delivery to enable 'deeper' engagement between targeted communities with less of a focus upon attaining large volumes of participants on Breaking Boundaries activities. However, some delays were experienced in setting up and inviting community organisations to the City Leadership forums and to date the original plan to schedule up to three CLFs in each city before Christmas 2021 was not possible. However, it is expected that these forums will be completed across all participating areas by April 2022.

These delays reflected mapping findings but also the resurgence of Covid-19 due to the Omicron variant and a return of some restrictions on indoor activity and mixing of households. Despite these issues, at the time of reporting, the following forums have taken place in each City:

- **Barking and Dagenham** – One forum (online) has taken place with a further session to be rescheduled in April 2022
- **Birmingham** – Two forums (including one face to face) have taken place with a third being scheduled for April 2022.
- **Bradford** – Two forums (both online) have taken place, a further session in April 2022 is to be scheduled.
- **Manchester** – Three forums (one online and two face to face) have taken place.
- **Slough** - Two forums (both online) have taken place, a further session is scheduled for April 2022.

Projects have already begun moving forward with delivery culminating in implementation plans submitted to YST in December 2021 identifying activity programmes being developed

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[1] Due to requirements within the local authority staff including Breaking Boundaries staff were reallocated to support other welfare provision provided by the council. For some staff these continued beyond the return date for Breaking Boundaries and its resumption of activities.
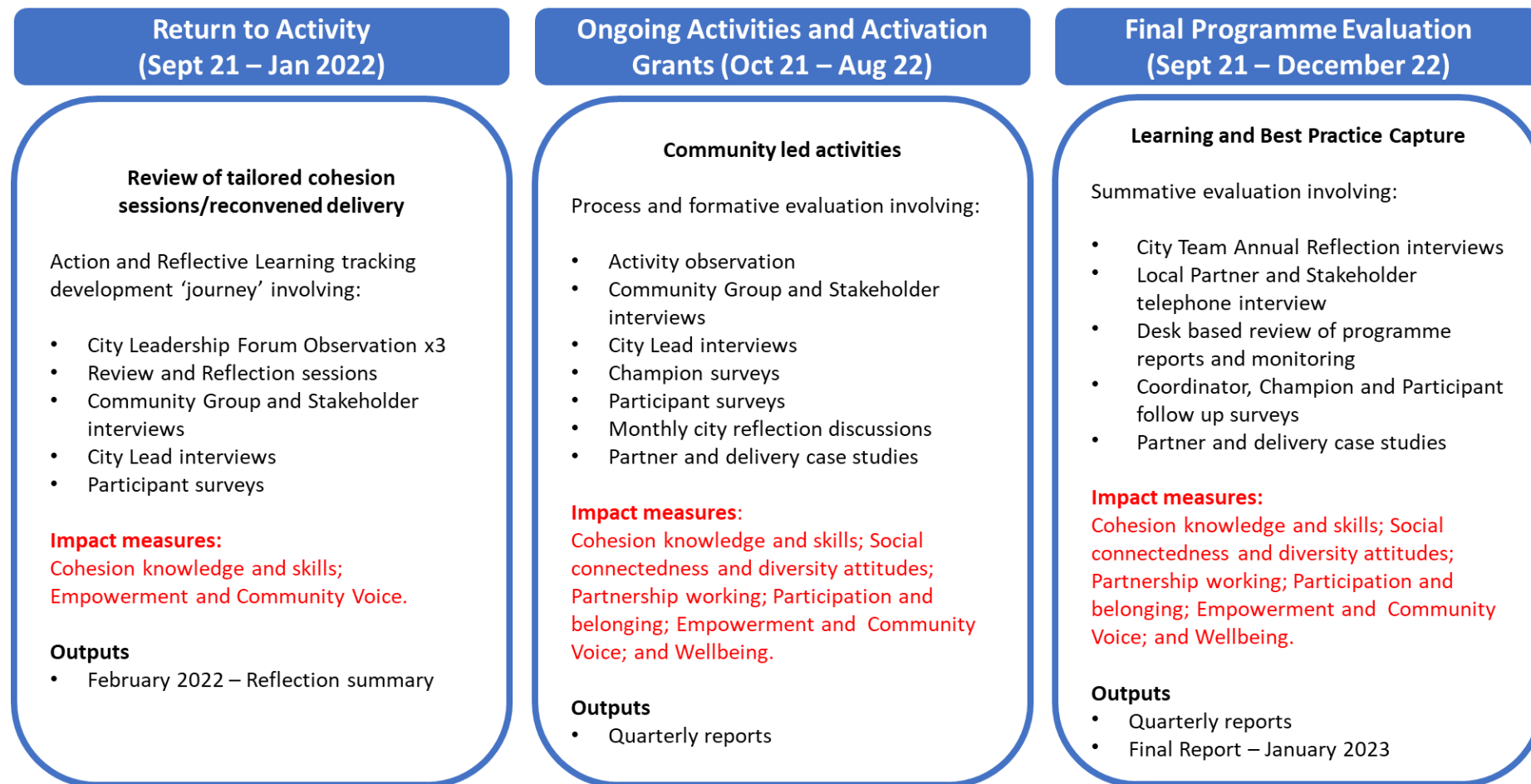
with partners involved in both the City Leadership Forums and other community engagement work by City teams. As the final round of forums are completed and wider engagement continues further activities are expected to be added. Although they have already brought together a range of community organisations that haven't worked together before, developed extended and new relationships with local cohesion teams and their strategic aims, and identified new target groups with the Black ethnic groups (Barking and Dagenham, Birmingham, Manchester, and Slough), and multi-faith activities (Barking and Dagenham, Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester, and Slough) that weren't previously happening in the cities. This has marked a step forward in activity planning by the cities that has been driven directly by the CLFs delivered to date.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the Breaking Boundaries programme has also been refined to compliment the targeted approach to delivery outlined above. In summary the M&E work has sought to focus more extensively on qualitative data collection to build a more detailed picture of how the targeted work is being implemented and how it is operating to identify key outcomes from delivery and the learning from them to shape ongoing practice for Breaking Boundaries but also other cohesion programmes.

The refined approach is summarised in **Figure 1** overleaf:

Figure 1: Overview of Revised M&E Approach

Return to Activity (Sept 21 – Jan 2022)

Review of tailored cohesion sessions/reconvened delivery

Action and Reflective Learning tracking development 'journey' involving:

- City Leadership Forum Observation x3
- Review and Reflection sessions
- Community Group and Stakeholder interviews
- City Lead interviews
- Participant surveys

Impact measures:
Cohesion knowledge and skills; Empowerment and Community Voice.

Outputs
- February 2022 – Reflection summary

Ongoing Activities and Activation Grants (Oct 21 – Aug 22)

Community led activities

Process and formative evaluation involving:

- Activity observation
- Community Group and Stakeholder interviews
- City Lead interviews
- Champion surveys
- Participant surveys
- Monthly city reflection discussions
- Partner and delivery case studies

Impact measures:
Cohesion knowledge and skills; Social connectedness and diversity attitudes; Partnership working; Participation and belonging; Empowerment and Community Voice; and Wellbeing.

Outputs
- Quarterly reports

Final Programme Evaluation (Sept 21 – December 22)

Learning and Best Practice Capture

Summative evaluation involving:

- City Team Annual Reflection interviews
- Local Partner and Stakeholder telephone interview
- Desk based review of programme reports and monitoring
- Coordinator, Champion and Participant follow up surveys
- Partner and delivery case studies

Impact measures:
Cohesion knowledge and skills; Social connectedness and diversity attitudes; Partnership working; Participation and belonging; Empowerment and Community Voice; and Wellbeing.

Outputs
- Quarterly reports
- Final Report – January 2023

Some aspects of the M&E approach have been curtailed by the delayed scheduling of the City Leadership Forums (review and reflection sessions have not been able to capture all the learning from the forums yet) and delay in resumption of some activities with participant numbers up to November 2021 being low.

However, to date the M&E approach has collated evidence from across the following sources for this report as shown in **Table 1** below:

Table 1: Summary of M&E data collection 1st September 2021 – 31st Jan 2022

Research task	Description	Responses / Total	% of those agreeing to interview / % of whole group
Regular Participants[2]	Initial registration form completed by participants when joining a regular activity and follow up telephone interview with them soon after joining to collect a more detailed baseline position from them. A post participation survey is undertaken by telephone 6-9 months after taking part. Data collected September 2021 – January 2022. Given the low numbers these surveys have been used to supply quotes for this report.	Registration: 118/118[3] Baseline: 63/83[4] Follow up: 36/73[5]	N/A 76%/70% 43%/49%
Review and reflections sessions	Shorter discussions were held with each of the city teams through regular catch ups to reflect on lessons learnt from the conduct of the City Leadership Forums. Further sessions will be scheduled following completion of final City Leadership Forums.	9[6]	N/A
Partners and Stakeholders	Qualitative telephone interviews were undertaken with contacts supplied by local City teams highlighting organisations they had worked with in planning, delivering activities as well as those who had taken part in City Leadership Forums.	20/20	75%
Review of progress reports and implementation plans	Desk review of progress reports submitted by each City and at a programme level in September and December 2021; and implementation plans from December 2021.	13 documents	100%
Case studies	Case studies were sought from local City teams and YST staff to highlight key aspects and learning from the refined approach.	4/4[7]	100%

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[2] This refers to participants in activities run by Breaking Boundaries that are due to last for six sessions or more and covers registrations between 1st September and 31st Jan 2022. Up to 31st January 585 individual participants registered with the programme.

[3] There has been underreporting by project delivery at local level as not all delivery agents have completed registration forms. No estimates are available how many regular participants have been missed. City teams have been supported to

[4] This covers those participants that consented to taking part in the baseline survey.

[5] This covers those participants who consented to taking part in the follow up survey.

[6] These cover the 1st and 2nd of three Forums – Barking is yet to schedule its 2nd City Leadership Forum.

[7] Completion of the study of a Badminton activity in Slough has been delayed due to staff absence.

Programme Delivery and Reach

At the time of reporting, the most recent full monitoring report shows that to the 31st August 2021 that there had been almost 500 regular attendees registered with the Breaking Boundaries programme with over 3,700 one off participants attending the 83 one off events delivered by the programme. Breaking Boundaries has supported 577 regular activities (those that are scheduled for 6 or more sessions).

Table 2: Summary of Breaking Boundaries delivery to 31st August 2021

	Community Champions	Regular attendees	One off attendees	Regular Activities	One off Activities
Barking	52	70	536	136	15
Birmingham	43	90	220	64	6
Bradford	55	75	997	162	16
Manchester	45	62	490	45	25
Slough	66	179	1524	170	21
Total	**261**	**476**	**3767**	**577**	**83**

Source: Programme Monitoring Reports

Further data collected through the monitoring system shows that up to 31st January 2022 a further 118 regular attendees to Breaking Boundaries events were registered and 37 additional activities were underway or planned as indicated on City Implementation plans. This means that 585 participants were registered with the 590 activities operating up to January 2022.

Across these implementation plans, targeting by activities has improved with explicit identification of groups and work undertaken to engage with relevant community groups to bring those groups together. This targeting is dominated by three specific community groups:

- Pakistani groups being targeted by 15 activities
- White British groups (14)
- Indian groups (11).

Whilst these remain the dominant focus, the implementation plans illustrate how Cities have responded to issues raised in the Year 2 evaluation report identifying increased targeting of other ethnic groups. This is particularly the case with targeting of Black African and Black Caribbean communities (Barking and Dagenham, Birmingham, Manchester, and Slough), and four projects targeting those of Somali origin – thus a total of 10 projects are underway or planned.

Furthermore, each of the Cities have identified activities that bring groups together from different faith groups for instance Hindu and Sikh groups in Manchester, Muslim and Christian groups in Barking and Dagenham, Muslim and Hindu groups in Birmingham, and Multi Faith Women's groups in Bradford.

Cities have also pivoted their targeting work to include groups identified through engagement with local cohesion teams and highlighted at CLFs including new work with East Europeans in Barking and Dagenham and Bradford.

Furthermore, there is also some specialist focus with activities targeting Romany (Slough), Arab (Birmingham), Migrant groups (Birmingham), and Multi-Faith (Barking and Bradford). This illustrates a greater sophistication in activity targeting arising directly from the CLFs which has shaped the subsequent planning and development work undertaken in each City demonstrating the progress that has been made. The evaluation will seek to capture the impacts of this activity as it concludes through into Spring 2022.

Programme Progress

Reviewing findings across secondary analysis, interviews and case study work, the evaluation highlights the following key features of programme:

Delivery Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Challenges	Solutions
Local delivery models	• Experienced team members in coordinator roles (**Bir, Brad, Man, Slo**) with good community linkages. • Strengthened links established with local cohesion staff through preparation for, and development of, CLFs helps ongoing focus of delivery on cohesion outcomes (**All**). • Expert cohesion support being utilised directly to shape planning and delivery (**All**) enabled stronger links to local strategic challenges/issues and draw in of new partners to delivery. • Consistent partnership engagement and facilitation is key to effective delivery model development **(All).**	• Line management arrangements not supporting less experienced staff enough around delivery (**B&D**) • Key cohesion focus not yet fully agreed through City Leadership Forums despite links built with cohesion teams CLFs yet to agree a key focus in forums (**B&D, Brad, and Man**) • Limited cross departmental working limits full programme development and linkage to local strategic issues (**All**) • Inconsistent contact with community partners and strategic partners undermines development of activities and ongoing focus on local cohesion issues (**All**)	• Staff retention and turnover as programme moves into final year of delivery (**All**) • Maintaining relationships with local Cohesion teams (**All**)[8] • Keeping existing community partners on board and engaged in the programme (**B&D, Brad**) • Cohesion team facing resourcing and staff pressures (**Bir, Man, Slough**).	• Prompt recruitment of replacements and effective handovers to new staff where vacancies occur • More direct working with cohesion teams on shared aims and agendas, not all set up work must be done by BB teams/staff.

[8] This is especially challenging in Slough where due to the financial challenges faced by the local authority the Cohesion team has been disbanded.

Delivery Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Challenges	Solutions
Community Outreach and Engagement	• Improving through focus on targeted community groups including focus on groups identified in Year 2 evaluation report (Black ethnic groups, multi-faith delivery) providing clear target for outreach (**All**) • Use of contacts through other teams in host organisation to develop new contacts with existing community activities (**Bir, Man, Slo**) • CLFs have had the right people in the room and helped develop new activities targeting new community groups that have not been engaged to date by the programme (**All**) • Coordinators who spend the most time out with delivery partners and community contacts have been able to drive forward the most activity (**Man, Slo**)	• Early CLFs provided too little time for input by community groups (**All**) • Coordinators need to spend more time out in the community engaging, where possible (**B&D, Birm, Brad**) • Some activities have been delayed because of changing priorities at delivery partners. Communication hasn't continued post CLF decision making so organisations haven't been enabled to take actions themselves and have waited for BB staff to take things forward (**B&D, Birm, Brad**)	• Some community groups remain suspicious of larger organisations approaching them (**All**) • Some community groups are unclear about the role and purpose of Breaking Boundaries (**B&D, Brad**)	• Outreach through key community leads like faith centres or voluntary sector infrastructure groups helps build trust so they advocate/broker on behalf of BB • Final CLFs should prioritise input from community partners to finalise agreed focus for activity development and agree activities to be prioritised.

Delivery Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Challenges	Solutions
Activity development	• Focus on targeted groups has been demonstrated more strongly through targeted activities underway with new community groups (**Bir, Brad, Man, Sol**) • Influence of CLFs is helping develop more wide-ranging programmes covering a more diverse range of community groups (**Bir, Brad, Man, Sol**) • Links to life skills and employability have been helpful in engaging some community groups (**Bir, Man, Slo**).	• Some activities have poorly specified links to cohesion outcomes (**B&D, Brad**) • Coordinators and others developing activities need further help to translate cohesion outcomes and link them to planned project activities (**All**) • Cricket 'theme' not consistently included in all cities planning, greater emphasis is needed on crickets' social elements alongside the multi-sports delivery options now available to the programme (**B&D, Birm, Man**).	• Value of funding is low and some organisations are not keen on administrative burdens for such low financial rewards (**All**) • Some providers feel let down about previous project activities not proceeding (**B&D, Brad**) making them reticent to participate again.	• Co-design work is critical with a need to focus particularly on the cohesion outcomes that will be delivered – come to the detail of delivery after these outcomes have been agreed • Briefing notes to be produced on the outcomes that can be associated with cohesion to provide worked examples of outcomes to be achieved • Add detail on cricket theme to implementation plan document • Progression routes for activities need to be identified so participants can continue to be engaged in cohesion activities whether or not run by BB.
Activity delivery	• Programmes of delivery have resumed with multi-sport focus proving attractive to wider groups (**All**) • Improved focus on cohesion outcomes in the aims of delivery (**All**) • Linking delivery to other services available at an organisation can help attract participants (**B&D, Slough**)	• Cricket 'theme' not consistently applied in all cities' activities being delivered, greater emphasis is needed on crickets' social elements to help retain this in programme delivery (**B&D, Birm, Man**) • Explicit delivery on cohesion outcomes not always apparent in activities; knowledge and use of cohesion prompt cards is mixed (**All**).	• Some members of community groups remain reticent about returning to face-to-face activity following Covid experiences (**All**). • Turnover of staff in delivery partners challenging consistency of delivery and availability of some premises is challenging (**B&D, Brad**)	• Consideration of hybrid delivery approaches for all activities needs to be considered and factored in to delivery • BB staff quality assure all safeguarding and Covid protocols to ensure delivery is safe and welcoming. • Progression routes need to be developed and utilised with participants clearly signposted to activities, real opportunities to encourage groups to develop Activation Grant proposals.

Delivery Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Challenges	Solutions
Cohesion focus and targeting	• Explicit focus on target groups is helping groups to mix in activities delivered by the programme with prompt cards helping this to happen (**Bir, Brad, Man, Slo**). • Cohesion focus is enhanced where local cohesion teams are directly engaged in programme development (**B&D, Bir, Brad**) • Co-design with participants helps pinpoint cohesion issues and mechanisms for addressing them, key is investing time to make connections and to identify solutions (**Bir, Brad, Man, Slo**). • Seeking help from Cohesion specialists can help understand cohesion issues in an area meaning targeting can be improved and activities better delivered (**Brad, Man, Slough**)	• Coordinators and others delivering activities can struggle to translate cohesion outcomes and link them to activity delivery in reporting meaning evidence on some measures (Attitudes to Diversity, Community Engagement, Wellbeing) can be weak (**All**) • Explicit focus on cohesion sometimes missing from activities or wider dimensions beyond social connectedness not considered (**All**) • Social connectedness may not lead to cohesive group development unless specific efforts are made to make this happen (**All**)	• Translating cohesion outcomes into actual delivery can be challenging and further local cohesion team support is needed to help this happen (**All**) • Cohesion teams not fully embedded with BB delivery or facing capacity issues (**Bir, Man, Slough**) • Partner organisations and participants understanding of meaning of cohesion and issues involved in including these in delivery (**All**).	• Briefing notes to be produced on the outcomes that can be associated with cohesion to provide worked examples of outcomes to be achieved and further methods of delivering these. • Use of prompt cards in final City Leadership Forum meetings to improve discussion and understanding of key local cohesion issues.
Monitoring and evaluation	• Qualitative emphasis provides opportunity to capture more depth on cohesion impacts and outcomes (**All**) • Regular participant registration provides strong throughput for baseline and follow up interviews to track cohesion outcomes (**Man, Slo**)	• Response levels from participants low, which is restricting the amount of quantitative analysis possible (**All**) • Full range of review and reflection sessions incomplete because of delays in roll out of CLFs (**All**)	• Engagement in M&E work by some City leads is variable leading to delays in data entry and supply of contacts (**B&D and Brad**) • Some participants unhappy to share registration details or participate in follow up surveys (**All**)	• Revised approach identified to track specific activities throughout delivery and build strong relationships and regular communication between Cities and Wavehill staff. • Briefing materials provided to cities to reassure participants about anonymity and safe storage of their data

			• Guidance document on top tips around registration data entry to be developed.

Outcomes

Social Cohesion Outcome/RAG	Commentary	Examples	Options to increase impact
Improved social connectedness and attitudes to diversity	Interviews with delivery partners (15) and with city teams highlighted that social connectedness was an explicit focus in all areas. There were deliberate approaches to facilitate this between groups that had not previously come together and connecting those that local intelligence and insight have highlighted as being key cohesion challenges in areas. The best examples illustrate how the connectedness is used to underpin the development of a shared group ethos so that the participants work together during activities and therefore have a better understanding of each other and better attitudes to diversity result. Weaker examples show how without facilitation the groups fail to fully mix, do not develop a shared codesigned group ethos and thus facilitate improved attitudes to diversity. There remain needs for activities to have a continual focus on connecting groups when working directly with them and use of the prompt cards will help here. Attitudes to diversity remains a more problematic area with more limited interview evidence that change is occurring, although groups identify improved understanding of the circumstances, and celebration of, different communities. This is an area where medium term impacts are more likely as activities mature and is expected to be observed during planned activity visits.	• Cricket and football project at Al Madina Mosque in Barking working with Christian and Muslim Women and Girls. • "*I look forward to meeting different people, with a stressful job and life, at least once a week it's nice to meet people and have some fun for a few hours.*" (**Male, Badminton project, Manchester**) • 24-week multi-sports sessions socially mixing Roma young people and Pakistani young people from Chalvey in Slough "*It's worth pursuing because particularly in a town like Slough you need to know each other's ways of doing things, as a city it takes a long time to break boundaries down but Slough's been doing it a long time as well.*" (**Pakistani. Male, Slough**) • "*I love the idea of the Breaking Boundaries project; I'm looking forward to seeing what else they come up with. It's a shame the lockdown came along, it slowed things down a bit. The coffee morning is a great way to introduce people to each other and when there are any issues, helping them, it's a lifeline for people, so if they do have problems they know where to come.*" (**Male, Bangladeshi, Slough**)	• Widening engagement of activities across broad ethnic groups thus extending work in South Asian communities for example through Indian, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani groups as is already being done in many projects, or groups across the African diaspora. White British groups should also be encouraged to join where other members agree. • There could be scope to, with the agreement of other participants, to invite another community group to participate in the activity after 5-6 weeks of delivery to build additional social connections. • Attitudes to diversity need a greater specific focus using the prompt cards to question and discuss these to identify ways they can be improved.

Social Cohesion Outcome/RAG	Commentary	Examples	Options to increase impact
Increased empowerment and community voice	There are more limited examples of these measures from the interviews. A strong theme across the interviews was on addressing challenges around the 'parallel lives' of targeted groups – living alongside each other yet not interacting with other community groups. However, it is important to note that the activity development coming out of the CLFs has put in place opportunities for community participation that have not existed before that brought these groups together in this way. Some projects have done just this by focussing on a specific local issue – littering, anti-social behaviour – where potential participants have felt powerless to engage with as a way forward here. Focussing cohesion discussions on such issues can help the groups build their own solutions to the issue when they might have felt unable to before. Interviewees did identify those decisions to attend and shape sessions were examples of this outcome especially where participants have been reticent to take part or have been absent from activities in the past. Furthermore, project leads and participants highlighted how 'safe' group environments also encouraged the sharing of challenges and issues faced by them supporting the identification of further activities or projects that could address them. The CLFs did highlight a range of practice where forum participants were making contributions to those meeting that were then shaping discussions around activity although with final forums yet to be held the specific outcomes of these contributions is not yet fully developed.	• Homeless community link up and interfaith work in Slough where Aik Saath young volunteers in partnership working with Slough Outreach, AWBS International Women's Club and Breaking Boundaries provided Christmas Meals for Local people experiencing homelessness. This work arose out of local cohesion discussions that highlighted homelessness as an area of concern. The group was supported in its development by a BB Activation grant. • "*It has been amazing, it's given me that adrenalin rush to go and do that one hour just for me, with Covid and lockdown, personal circumstances meant it was good for my daughters to give it a go with me, it was good to have a chit chat and a work out.*" (**Female Indian participant, Birmingham**) • "*There's a lot of Asian communities here and a lot of Somalian communities so it is breaking down boundaries and it's for us women to go out there who are restricted due to child commitments, due to social and economy kind of pressures but this was one hour free of charge…where I can bring the kids and play cricket with them in a safe environment without being judged and also having the opportunity to meet other people as well, like-minded people*" (**Pakistani female, Birmingham**).	• Where projects are focussed on this outcome co-design work should focus upon the empowerment dimension or community voice aspects that are expected to be delivered. A focus on a specific community outcome or event has proved to be a useful option for some projects.

Social Cohesion Outcome/RAG	Commentary	Examples	Options to increase impact
Increased community participation and sense of belonging	Interviews provided less strong examples of these aspects being delivered in the activities developed since June 2021. Although new community participation opportunities have been created by the activities there is more work to do to translate engagement with BB into other forms of community engagement, but BB activities are supporting community participation. A key area of focus around this cohesion outcome is also (like the empowerment measure) around tackling the sense of 'parallel lives' of different targeted community groups. Thus, activities seek to bring groups together who might not otherwise come together to participate in activities in their community. Interviewees were clear that BB has created new opportunities for this to happen and the next step will be to create progression routes into other community activities, routes that have yet to be developed. Again, CLFs demonstrated a key approach for fostering participation and a resultant sense of belonging through their invitation and participation in them. Sense of belonging was a little stronger as reported to us by interviewees as the new activities and opportunities to engage were helping to improve that sense for participants. Key ways in which this has been approached include visits to faith centres and activities to understand the festivals, traditions and issues faced by them.	• Badminton and Bhangra projects in Birmingham "*It was such an amazing platform for women to come together to a place where we could talk and comfort each other, it was a relief, it was our time, it was for us and we were allowed to have that time, for many women, they didn't have that opportunity before, those weeks and sessions have made such a difference, that one hour a week is embedded in now, it's an hour for us.*" (**Female, South Asian, Slough**) • 20 Week Badminton session developed in collaboration with Sir Lankan Youth Association and Slough Mitra Mandal as a joint activation grant "*It is a great way to introduce people to each other and when there are any issues, helping them, it's a lifeline for people, so if they do have problems they know where to come.*" (**Female, South Asian participant**). • Activation grant project in Slough for Women and Girls as both Sri-Lankan and Pakistani groups use same facilities and have same issues with anti-social behaviours in the park but have not felt empowered to take things forward. Activity joined them up to create activity that discourages anti-social behaviour in Manor Park Recreation Ground.	• Where projects are focussed on this outcome co-design work should focus on specific community outcome or event in an area where participants have felt powerless or without control or knowledge of how it could be addressed could be a useful option for projects. •

Social Cohesion Outcome/RAG	Commentary	Examples	Options to increase impact
Improved partnership working	This is another area of stronger outcome performance with all delivery partner interviewees able to identify partners they have begun to work with because of their BB engagement. Local partners suggested that Breaking Boundaries' key strength is the links with other organisations and community projects that have been developed through the most recent work through the CLFs. This was noted by interviewees as being strong where it was also facilitated by local cohesion teams or experts who helped extend the partnership working into planning and activity development aligned with local strategic partnerships. This is primarily delivered through the facilitation and outreach work undertaken by City staff supported by the Sporting Equals Activators, and Cohesion leads. It demonstrates the particular value of this working relationship in fostering such links and interviewees also highlighted how continued ongoing work was critical to sustain these partnerships, particularly return from Covid lockdowns. It shows that there has been an outcome from the particular focus on fostering partnership development highlighted in the Year 2 impact report, though there remains a need for a continued focus on this, particularly for City teams to actively encourage the partners to continue their working together outside of BB activities so they take on their own responsibility.	• Link up between community coach and youth focussed pop-up initiative in Barking "*Lots of benefits here we've linked up with lots of other organisations….[We get to]…spread our name a bit wider so more people know what we can do and the opportunities we can provide young people. We can link them up to our sports activities and the food and hospitality and working behind the bar and being part of the social hub, which is run by the young people and supported and they are buddied to an adult creative.*" (**Female, Black Caribbean Project lead, Barking**) • "*The project has made the groups think about other organisations they may or not share and interest and encouraged them to reach out. This is something that probably wouldn't happen, due to the nature of people's work, now they have a reason to get to know another organisation they wouldn't normally do.*" (**Community Coordinator, Manchester**) • Also, the links to GOGA in Bradford; link with Youth Offending team in Slough and links with large community groups in Manchester.	Maintaining the continued focus of widening the range of partners the programme works with in relation to targeted community groups in each City area, and also identifying joint working opportunities to identify progression routes.

Social Cohesion Outcome/RAG	Commentary	Examples	Options to increase impact
Improved wellbeing	This remains an area of medium to long term outcome, although some wellbeing outcomes were identified in terms of improved confidence, socialisation (tackling social isolation), and the mental health benefits arising from those outcomes. Benefits around mental health were particularly noted in the views expressed by delivery partners particularly around short-term mental health benefits for participants especially as lockdown restrictions have receded. Alongside benefits from increased levels of physical activity participants have highlighted improved sense of wellbeing resulting from their activity participation. However, wellbeing remains an area attracting less specific focus of all the cohesion outcome areas targeted by delivery thus far. Although well planned projects will help to achieve against this outcome This is a focus that is more pronounced as areas have emerged from lockdowns providing a key mechanism for tackling social isolation and disengagement that can detrimentally affect the wellbeing of those being targeted by BB. The outcome measure remains a secondary measure for the programme but this could change as further delivery takes place.	• "*I think it's great, for people who are stuck at home, vulnerable, to get out and meet with likeminded individuals, to make friends, it's a good initiative.*" (**Female, White British, Slough**) • "*They were so confident by the end. They came and they spoke about their own personal lives, they became a bit of a family, experiences. It's easy to share things with people who aren't you family, even though it's strangers it's great. IT's not easy to make friends out of your circle, especially if you're in an extended family.*" (**Project Lead, Bhangra, Birmingham**) • "*I have really enjoyed seeing people come out of their shell, I'm used to doing other voluntary things, originally when it started off was there was lot of older people and quite a few of the ladies' health took a turn for the worst after lockdown so there's fewer people but I think there's a better mix of ages now. I enjoy being part of something and helping to make a difference, helping to organise things, I just enjoy it.*" (**Project lead, Coffee Morning, Slough**) • "*I think it's been good for my children for them to gain that confidence other than in school as that was one of the key things that was picked up in one of my daughter's school reports was that she needs to participate in more sports outside of school to build that confidence and that was one reason why I was looking out for things. I enjoyed the fact that the children enjoyed it and they were getting exercise at the same time and making new friends as well.*" (**Black Female, Birmingham**). • In Birmingham the most recent City Leadership Forum highlighted that a particular focus on improving wellbeing of communities was supported by groups who attended and will be a focus for the final Forum in the future	• Where projects are focussed on this outcome co-design work should focus on specific wellbeing issues that could be addressed agreed with participants. • There is interest in this area coming out of lockdown so specific work around improving mental health and wellbeing could be helpful to develop outcomes in this area. It may also emerge from activities are well planned and co-designed with local communities.

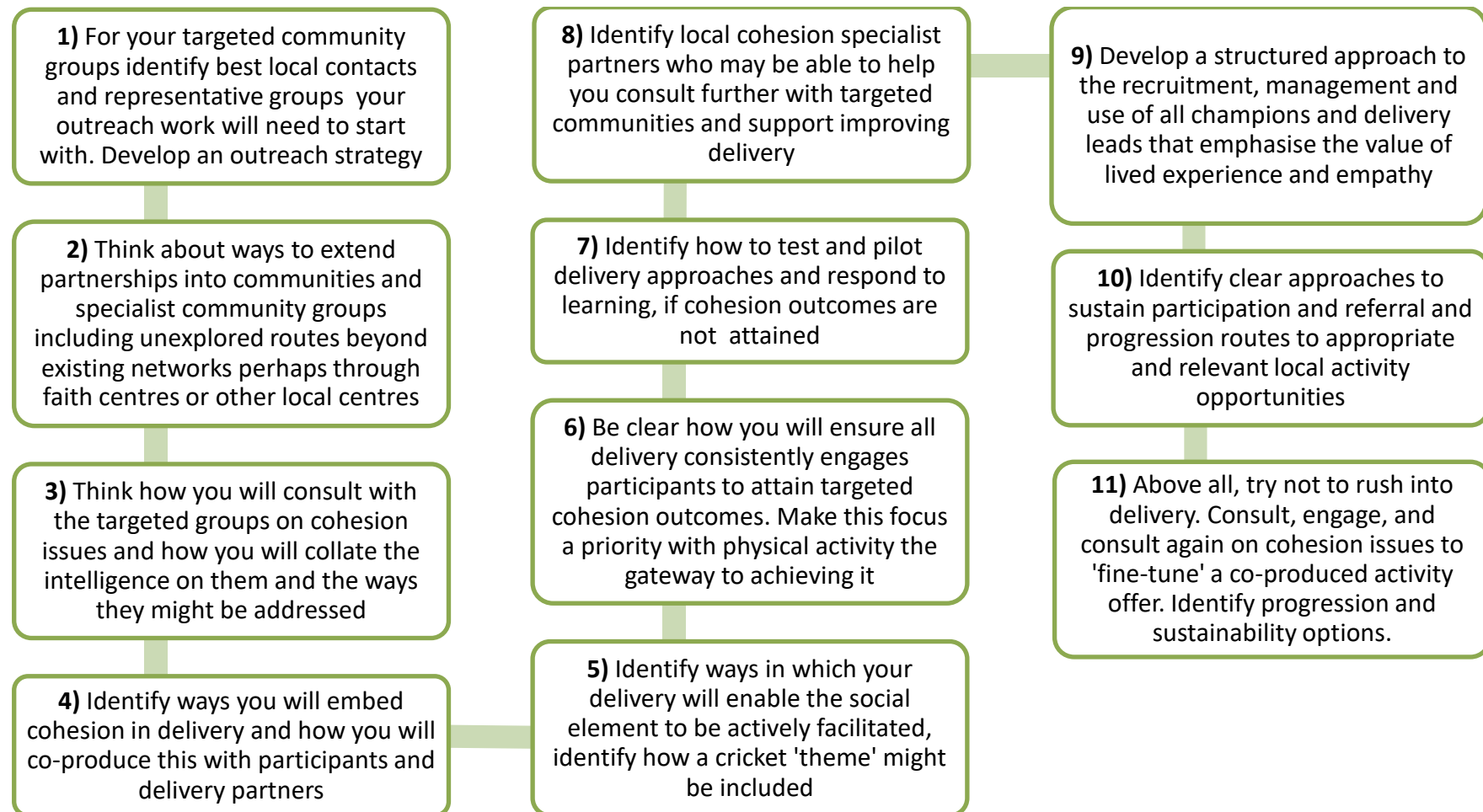| Social Cohesion Outcome/RAG	Commentary	Examples	Options to increase impact
Improve knowledge and skills to support community cohesion	The CLFs have contributed to delivery against this outcome highlighting the importance of the need to link effectively with community organisations to reach community groups. Project leads in interviews highlighted the need to keep their groups in information loops so that perspectives on the parallel lives of different groups, or concern about lack of opportunities for some, can help foster cohesion work through the partnerships BB is establishing through the forums. It also highlights the need to regularly reengage with faith centres and leaders to drive things forward. Examples beyond City Leadership Forums are currently limited because the focus in June – December 2021 was on return to activity. Interview findings highlight that post-CLFs community groups have been discussing and developing skills to take forward cohesion work with the activities that have been happening as they have engaged participants.	• Faith centre programmes (**Bar, Man, and Slo**). • "*Leaders are protective of their members and are keen to ensure that offers are right for them before proceeding they want to avoid activity of activities sake.*" (**Community Co-ordinator, Birmingham**) • Racism and discrimination focus and response to ECB pronouncements on these issues will provide additional resources the programme can use but also the programme can provide solutions to organisations that might be struggling with these issues themselves.	There is scope to encourage more programmes where community settings (faith centres, cultural and community centres) are engaged by BB to open their doors for other residents and communities. This can help build understanding of those settings and the cultures of those using them. Schemes already undertaken in B&D, Manchester and Slough could provide useful exemplars for this going forward. Continued engagement with local communities through a programme of CLF-type events could help to cement and extend the knowledge and skill development demonstrated through CLFs.

Lessons / recommendations

Table 3: Recommended actions from the learning drawn from delivery since June 2021 include:

Recommended Action/Lessons Learnt	Action to be taken at:	
	Programme level	**City level**
It is critical to build and maintain links with local Cohesion teams, or local Cohesion experts where such teams are not in place. Cohesion teams can be asked to lead some CLF sessions, co-design activities, or even activities. Regular engagement with local cohesion contacts should be established and planned in to calendars accordingly.	✓	✓
Coordinators must get out into their communities visiting community groups on a regular basis to understand their challenges and issues but to also maintain their engagement with the programme. Building understanding should be an ongoing activity.		✓
Early in project development ensure that there is a focus on the co-design of progression routes and next steps for participants and projects, particularly as delivery moves into the final stages. This should also focus explicitly on identifying which of the programme's cohesion outcomes the project delivery will provide. This will help develop the sustainability of the programme and enable community groups to become more skilled in this kind of activity.		✓
Identify ways in which community organisations can be used to advocate for, and broker, programme delivery. Work should focus on codesigning approaches for building trust and engagement with new participants and partners and the messages that will be shared about project and programme aims.		✓
Recruitment and retention strategies need to be developed so that replacement of programme and project staff can be addressed as quickly as possible prior to staff departure where possible.	✓	✓

Figure 2: Emerging delivery blueprint for Breaking Boundaries

This summary provides and overview, drawn from our evaluation findings, that highlights exemplars and good practice in planning, developing and delivering BB activities and projects that will provide cohesion outcomes. It's intended to guide cities in their planning and development work going forwards.

1) For your targeted community groups identify best local contacts and representative groups your outreach work will need to start with. Develop an outreach strategy

2) Think about ways to extend partnerships into communities and specialist community groups including unexplored routes beyond existing networks perhaps through faith centres or other local centres

3) Think how you will consult with the targeted groups on cohesion issues and how you will collate the intelligence on them and the ways they might be addressed

4) Identify ways you will embed cohesion in delivery and how you will co-produce this with participants and delivery partners

8) Identify local cohesion specialist partners who may be able to help you consult further with targeted communities and support improving delivery

7) Identify how to test and pilot delivery approaches and respond to learning, if cohesion outcomes are not attained

6) Be clear how you will ensure all delivery consistently engages participants to attain targeted cohesion outcomes. Make this focus a priority with physical activity the gateway to achieving it

5) Identify ways in which your delivery will enable the social element to be actively facilitated, identify how a cricket 'theme' might be included

9) Develop a structured approach to the recruitment, management and use of all champions and delivery leads that emphasise the value of lived experience and empathy

10) Identify clear approaches to sustain participation and referral and progression routes to appropriate and relevant local activity opportunities

11) Above all, try not to rush into delivery. Consult, engage, and consult again on cohesion issues to 'fine-tune' a co-produced activity offer. Identify progression and sustainability options.

Next steps

Programme next steps

The key next steps the for the programme will need to focus upon completing the final wave of CLFs in each city and the translation of these into a further refined programme of activity reflecting the key cohesion issues identified in them. The final months of delivery through the summer of 2022 will need to take advantage of the recent dropping of all Covid restrictions (Feb 2022) to identify programme of activity that meet the 'risk' appetite of community organisations and participants and the availability of venues suitable for activity delivery.

There remain a range of challenges moving into March 2022 and beyond for the programme including:

- Maintaining momentum from June to December delivery by spending time with those individuals, interviews with delivery partners shows that building trust in this arena really takes time and getting the outcomes pinned down and agreed can be very challenging but will be crucial to support programme delivery.
- Continued engagement of local Cohesion teams within local authorities. There remain pressures on resources available to these teams and Breaking Boundaries staff will need to maintain ongoing relationships with them so that their expertise can continue to be brought to bear on the programme.
- Community groups are still struggling to get people back in through the doors despite the removal of Covid restrictions. It is likely that groups will need to work hard to encourage participation.
- Staff turnover and ongoing retention of staff to programme end
- Cohesion skill improvement will need to be a key focus for programme sustainability. This can build on work in three cities upskilling through education workshops in sport, engaging Breaking Boundaries staff in the upcoming Sporting Equals Race Charter Workshop in March 2022.
- There are also opportunities to utilise the Commonwealth Games to linking it to a BB legacy that seeks to draw on the Games as a recruitment and participation opportunity for existing BB projects, particularly those taking place in the host city, Birmingham.
- A final challenge rests with the ongoing focus on Racism and Discrimination in Cricket arising out of the Azeem Rafiq case and proposed actions to be taken by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and local cricket boards. Engagement with these proposals will need to be handled sensitively but BB provides an opportunity to provide a ready-made opportunity to drive forward action is this critical area.

Evaluation next steps and expected insights

The evaluation moves into the final summative phases focused on impact assessment of the programme this is going to involve:

- Project Visits
- Review and reflection sessions on cohesion outcomes with participants, community leaders, and delivery staff
- Case study work
- Partner interviews
- Participant interviews – further baselines and follow ups
- Final interviews with City teams including Community Coordinators, Line Manager and Activators.

The delivery of these aspects of the evaluation will cover the following elements:

- The **final process evaluation** assessing whether the design and delivery of the programme has producing expected outputs and outcomes to enable the draft delivery blueprint to be updated whilst identifying key lessons learnt to support future community cohesion work by YST, Sporting Equals and funding of such projects by Spirit.

- The final outcomes evaluation identifying whether the intended outcomes of the programme have been delivered and identifying whether sustainable differences are in train amongst the local communities the programme has worked with. This will include key lessons and learning on how a sustainable difference can be made by programmes working to improve social cohesion. Findings will draw on the toolkit developed by Belong on sport/physical activity and cohesion development.

A final report due for submission to YST in January 2023 will draw on findings of data collection to take place up to and including December 2022.

Appendix – Case Studies

Case Study: Facilitating Social Mixing and Connectedness
Bolly Bhangra (Sept – Dec 2021), Birmingham

Activity Aims
The activity was aiming to facilitate mixing between women from different South Asian ethnic groups, to tackle underlying tensions between different groups of South Asian women from Bangladeshi, Guajarati, and Pakistani backgrounds.

How Activity Developed
The leader of this activity had been involved in delivering Bhangra sessions and youth cricket programmes in the area, through which she met a Breaking Boundaries ambassador who linked them up with the co-ordinator in Birmingham. The activity leader highlighted that there was a strong link between their philosophy towards getting women active and the focus of Breaking Boundaries on using sport to improve cohesion. This led to them working with the programme to develop a specially designed activity using elements of Bhangra fitness activities, and All Stars cricket sessions.

Delivery
Originally scheduled for **6 weeks of delivery, the activity was extended to 12 weeks** at the request of the participants (17) because they were so well engaged. There had been no hesitation around a return to face to face after lockdown and plenty of space was available at the chosen venue. It was intended as an activity that could act as a 'gateway' for South Asian women, mainly stay-at-home mothers, to emerge from Covid lockdown and engage in activities out of the household.

Recruitment happened through word of mouth with participants inviting other contacts as the weeks progressed. Organisers Bhangra Blaze publicised the activity via their Facebook group. As the activity developed the women also began to bring their daughters to sessions, which built inter-generational connections.

What Happened?
The activity was aiming to facilitate mixing between women from different South Asian ethnic groups, specifically Bangladeshi, Indian, and Pakistani and evidence suggests this has been achieved. The leader felt these participants had been easy to bring together because the use of dance provided something that was familiar as a gateway into cricket which was less familiar to them.

"I think getting the ladies in with the bhangra, and then introducing them to the cricket slowly has been the key here. They've enjoyed it, they don't realise their talents, when they think of cricket, they think it's a man's sport or they've never had an opportunity to play. Then [working together]…we'd incorporate bhangra moves and cricket moves together, and they really loved it." (**Project Lead**)

The activity has had an impact on several key cohesion areas for those it has worked with, although it is not yet clear how sustained these impacts have been given delivery concluded in Dec 2021.

Specific Cohesion Impacts

The activity lead did identify that the areas of impact included:

- **Improved social connectedness**: as different groups were brought together on their own terms connections between them soon developed:

  "For all of them after lockdown just any social connectedness was good, they're all mothers and have big extended families, so it gave them the opportunity to connect with others as just themselves on their own terms, not as a mother or a daughter or a caregiver" (**Project Lead**)

  Participants did not identify a significant impact on their attitudes to diversity as they were positive at the outset of the activity, it was more important for the group connections to be made.

  The leader also noted that despite the women starting the sessions as strangers, by the end they became a bit of 'family'. This positive group dynamic was attributed in part to the women having the space to have open conversation – being out of their usual social circle or extended family. The local Coordinator also identified that good links were made to celebrate festivals relevant to participants increasing understanding of each other.

- **Feeling empowered:** From some participants there was a sense that they had been **empowered** to be open with others in the group about their challenges and issues, to women from other South Asian groups they had not met before:

  "I enjoy it, even though I have a busy schedule looking after kids etc. it gives me the chance to get out the house to meet new people and do exercise." (**Female, Pakistani**)

  Whilst others felt comfortable to bring other family members along:

  "It has been amazing, it's given me that adrenalin rush to go and do that one hour just for me, with Covid and lockdown, personal circumstances meant it was good for my daughters to give it a go with me, it was good to have a chit chat and a work out." (**Female, Bangladeshi**)

  Therefore, in these ways the participants were given a stronger voice in the community of the group though there were no specific examples to date of this voice being extended to their communities outside of the activity.

- **Community participation/sense of belonging** – the leader was surprised that the choice of Edgbaston for delivery was not a deterrent to participants because of the travel distance involved. The venue seemed to act as a spur for their sense of belonging to something 'special':

> "At first I was a bit worried people wouldn't want to come to Edgbaston because it was quite far for them. To be able to have the lovely space and the lovely views, we started off quite early in the evening…so we got the daylight and could see the views. It just made them feel important that they got to use the space and…they kept coming back, there were a lot of people who came to all 12 sessions" (**Project Lead**)

> "It was such an amazing platform for women to come together to a place where we could talk and comfort each other, it was a relief, it was our time, it was for us…many women, they didn't have that opportunity before" (**Female, Pakistani**)

- **Wellbeing** – there was evidence not only of improved confidence in the women, but the wellbeing benefits that come with it. The leader reported the activity supporting the mental health of participants that had worsened during Covid-19 lockdowns.

> "They were so confident by the end. They came and they spoke about their own personal lives, they became a bit of a family, experiences. It's easy to share things with people who aren't you family, even though it's strangers it's great. It's not easy to make friends out of your circle." (**Activity Lead**)

The Future

Participants and the activity leader are very positive about their experiences through Breaking Boundaries and are keen to identify ways that further activities could happen:

> "It's good, it'll be good if it carries on, to bring people together, because of Covid it gives people the chance to come and do something together in a safe environment, especially for ladies."
> (**Female, Indian**)

There is a need to identify ways in which such activities can be built further using volunteers so they are less dependent on additional funding and more self-supporting. It was noted that having provision that was free at the point of access was key to making the activity open to all and including women for whom cost may be a barrier to joining in group sport or fitness sessions.

Top Tips for Effective Delivery

- **Seeking out specialist providers with pre-existing links with targeted communities** is shown to be the best approach for establishing projects working on cohesion. Those projects understand key activities that appeal to marginalised groups, using trusted activity leaders as ways of ensuring meaningful engagement.

- **Considering the location of the provision is key to encouraging participants to attend**; this may persuade participants to travel further to the 'right' venue beyond their local area, especially if they feel empowered to shape and contribute to delivery and move outside their usual day to day lives. In this case, the use of Edgbaston Cricket ground, a place none of the women may have accessed before, was a key pull factor.

- **Supporting active social mixing in an informal group setting** may enable other cohesion outcomes to be attained, particularly a sense of belonging and confidence. This should be relatively unstructured in its approach though can be facilitated by the project resource packs produced by YST.

- **Targeted interventions, as exemplified in the above case study, are important for accessing harder to reach groups** who may have additional support needs or need persuasion to go outside their usual space and routine. In this instance, it was noted that the women didn't think that the sport activities were for they were specifically targeted.

- **Understanding the needs of targeted groups is key** to developing and delivering engaging activities that support engagement and moves towards cricket and community participation

Case Study: Partnership Creation
Youth Spot Bar (January 2022), Barking and Dagenham

Detail of the Activity

This case study provides some useful insights on how Breaking Boundaries can bring different community organisations together to be able to work together to deliver activities that support the achievement of the programme's aims around cohesion. It illustrates how through facilitation work Breaking Boundaries City teams can enable other organisations to deliver through the programme.

Activity Development and Delivery

The Youth Spot Bar is a youth led activity that seeks to engage with young people around issues that concern them in their local community, particularly related to the links between different community groups and identifying ways to address hate and street crime amongst young people. Youth Spot Bar was first involved in Breaking Boundaries in 2018/19 around a community festival. They were involved more with the programme through the local Activator and a new project has been developed to run at Relish in the town centre from February 2022. This activity aims to bring groups together, get them engaged with each other to create connections between the young people, particularly White British and Black African/Caribbean groups.

The activity involves social activities around food, drinks, and music alongside sporting activities supported by a local group established by a Barking resident to bring young people into physical activity, a Community Tennis and multi-sports group.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped

The link up of these organisations has been established through Breaking Boundaries and the activity gives both organisations a more permanent base for their activities, as one project lead commented that being involved with Breaking Boundaries has:

"*Spread our name a bit wider so more people know what we can do and the opportunities we can provide young people. We can link them up to our sports activities and the food and hospitality and working behind the bar and being part of the social hub, which is run by the young people and supported and they are buddied to an adult creative.*" (**Project Lead, Barking**)

Both projects are interested particularly in how their activities can help deliver the aims of the programme because they see a strong link up between what they are trying to do and what Breaking Boundaries is trying to achieve.

What Happened – Impacts on Cohesion
As the activities have only just started the main impacts around cohesion so far have been at an organisational level limited to the development of the partnership and improving some of their skills to support social cohesion work in the future.

- **Improved Partnership Working:** These organisations wouldn't be working together without Breaking Boundaries and the Activator getting them involved with the project. Working through these kinds of organisations – although often small in terms of their own staff – are the best way to reach into communities because local people often trust these organisations more:

"Breaking Boundaries can support grassroots project to deliver…[and]…when you do that the relationship will be a lasting one. BB needs to be better linked into the grassroots work through us and give us the resources to deliver."
(**Project Lead**)

This works because, as the Community Tennis Group lead highlighted, it enables delivery to be more consistent and regular. Where activities appear and disappear that makes local residents suspicious and resistant to getting involved because they are not

- **Improved skills around social cohesion work** – for both projects engagement with Breaking Boundaries has improved aspects of their delivery through support provided around management and key processes through the team at the local authority access:

"I've no funding…[outside of Breaking Boundaries]…I'd like to get the parents involved more. It was the networking that was important to me and through that I got involved in Breaking Boundaries…did my first aid and DBS

sure that if they invest the time the project/activity will still be there in a few weeks/months. The lead highlighted that by building that trust means that the project/activity is more likely to become known through word of mouth because those participating in its 'trust' it more as something useful or relevant to their community.

What both leads also highlighted was that the initial establishment of contact to start the partnership building process should, if possible, happen face to face and that it needs to be managed effectively by Breaking Boundaries:

"I like to meet people face to face to help build the trust and help me pass on positive promises but this needs to be followed through otherwise you are letting lots of people…[in the community]…down. It's not smooth so it means my contacts look at me with suspicion this needs to be managed better." (**Project Lead**)

and I'm starting my coaching course [It's important because…] if you don't link your services with others, it's hard to do these kinds of work" (**Project Lead**)

Through this, interviews with the project leads identified that this means the projects are better able to link with local people and support them in dealing with local issues they have worried about before (like littering or anti-social behaviour) yet have been unsure about how to deal with it. By bringing these groups together

through the community projects dialogue can be established, this enables those individuals to discuss solutions and identify ways things could be taken forward. Supporting the projects in this way means they can run better activities that are more likely to be referred to other through word of mouth.

The Future

They are looking forward to how this activity can make lots of contacts with young people in the area. However, both organisations emphasised that facilitation and logistics support was important for them as they have limited resources to do this and deliver their activities

Top Tips for Effective Delivery

- **Let the activities be driven by young people**, they know best and perhaps 'you don't:

  "*the wider multi-sports focus is useful and that needs to keep being pushed we've always tried to show that we don't just do one type of sport, let it be driven by young people.*" (**Project lead**)

- **Community organisations often need specific help in setting up processes and practices** so they can easily demonstrate to others that their activities are safe and well-managed. This can be a good way to engage community organisations because they are often already struggling with these things. "*Before they give the funding help to set up venues for delivery and help to get engaged with them or the contacts to secure those things, BB could facilitate a lot more things. Help with the logistics, getting processes and policies in place, all the things that take a really long time to get in place. They've helped with some of that and that's really been helpful*" (**Project lead**)

- **Reaching out through community organisations is often the best way to reach the most disengaged**, though the activities that run with them need to reassure local people that there is going to be long term options around them. Many are suspicious of projects that 'drop in' and then 'drop out' of areas because community links haven't properly been established. This puts the community organisation under pressure because they are the ones that face 'flak' from the communities they are working with, not Breaking Boundaries. It is then difficult to rebuild that trust for future activities.

Case Study: Re-establishing Community Links
Al Madina Mosque (September 2021 - January 2022), Barking and Dagenham

Detail of the Activity
This case study provides some useful insights on how a key partner in Barking and Dagenham, has helped the Breaking Boundaries project rebuild links and activities in the local community following Covid lockdown. It also highlights how linking project activities, particularly sporting activities, to other services available at the Mosque enables connections with young people who are participants in the programme to be made that are more focused around their needs including mental health. A key message is to make sure that enough time is given for relationships with participants to be built.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped
Breaking Boundaries has supported the project lead to make contact, and engage with, other senior leaders in the Mosque about the importance of providing a greater range of sports activities but particularly emphasised on opening their premises to non-Muslims and engaging with other faith centres.

Breaking Boundaries has funded several activities at the Mosque that use the coaches there (many non-Muslims themselves) to deliver activities. Activities fuse sporting activity with socialising to bring different groups of young people across religious and ethnic group to take part together. BB has facilitated the resumption of this activity after the pandemic. Breaking Boundaries resumption has also come at the right time providing activities that enable people to get together again:

"I don't think we've had any difficulties in getting things going again it was just the stop start nature of the lockdowns…we just had to do posters again. Getting the numbers wasn't at all difficult because people wanted to get out of the house and have someone else to talk." (**Project Lead, Al Madina**).

What Happened – Impacts on Cohesion
The ongoing work at Al Madina Mosque demonstrates outcomes against social cohesion in three areas:

- **Attitudes to diversity** – Delivery of activities at the Mosque has encouraged a wide range of non-Muslim groups to visit it and the mixed groups in delivery also mean they can encourage participants to understand each other but also appreciate that challenges don't differ too much between each other. The lead also highlighted how this meant that participants seemed to better understand the lives of others who are different to them. The lead also believes that the fact that many of the coaches come from a non-Muslim background helps improve attitudes to diversity because many of the young people who attend Mosque are being coached by them.

- **Increased community involvement –** Breaking Boundaries has also encouraged them to have a wider focus in their sports activities around other issues that might be affecting participant's lives. Conversations with Activators and taking part in some of the previous sessions has highlighted that their focus on needs of young people needs to be wider and that the activities they run need to make specific efforts to identify these:

Through this the services at the Mosque have wider community involvement and encourage them to share their own experiences with others in their lives, encouraging others to attend activities at the Mosque.

"We're getting regular numbers taking part in exercise and we tag on social interaction. So, after the session they go into a room for chats and refreshments. We make sure our mentors are there and through that it has highlighted a need for a focus on mental health amongst young people. We've then linked them up with other mentors who are specialised in counselling young people. We can support so much because of the other services and the wraparound services. We offer from cradle to grave support and we cater for mental health, physical and nutritional health." (**Project Lead, Al Madina**).

- **Improved partnership working** – the project lead highlighted how during the pandemic many faith centres had been involved in a wide range of welfare support (food parcels, check ins with local residents) which often involved them working with other faith centres. Breaking Boundaries work had offered the chance to build on this and Al Madina were reaching out to some Christian centres to see how they could support them through their provision of physical activity so that those individuals could come to the Mosque to take part in the activities on offer.

This has led to members of the Nigerian community using the Mosque facilities and there are plans to see how this could link further with the physical activity sessions on offer. This is aimed to help tackle Black African groups separation from other communities in the borough, and they are looking at similar work with East European groups.

"[The Mosque]…can spread the word as well, we are a sounding board for other organisations." (**Project Lead, Al Madina**).

In these cases, other places of worship will 'check in' with them about the programme and whether they should be involved. The organisations are important advocates and brokers for the programme with a wide range of other community organisations as a result. Again, this emphasises that such partnership development work doesn't always need to be done by City staff they can instead facilitate other community organisations in their targeted areas to do it on their behalf.

The Future

Al Madina aims to be central to delivery of Breaking Boundaries in Barking and has further plans to offer activities for the programme through its facilities at the Mosque. It will be hosting the next city leadership forum to connect further with other community organisations. They reiterated the need to keep local messaging with community groups going so that understanding of the purpose and aims of Breaking Boundaries keeps being heard, as the lead highlighted that sometimes people don't always pick up or listen properly to your message, they often need to hear it several times.

Top Tips for Effective Delivery

- **The pandemic changed some attitudes to working together to be much more open to this**. A lot of faith centres were delivering lots of welfare activities during lockdowns with other faith centres, many they hadn't worked with much, or at all, before. There's an opportunity to build on this further working across faith centre networks in areas targeted by Breaking Boundaries.

- **Designated socialising time really helps understand the challenges participants are facing in their lives.** Participants will often reveal much more about these issues and having staff/volunteers on hand can help identify some of the issues people might want support around – perhaps mental health or financial issues – where they can be encouraged to work with specialist support staff but also make links with others around those experiences building better social connections between them.

- **Reaching out through interfaith community organisations is a good way to reach into communities**, consistency of delivery is key here to ensure that trust is built overtime and build confidence of participants to attend regularly. Though you need to be prepared to tackle silo working and make a specific effort to bring different organisations together.

Case Study: Collaborative Activity Development
Sri Lankan Youth Association and Slough Mitra Mandal
(September 2021 - March 2022), Slough

Detail of the Activity

This case study focuses on the development and delivery of a 20 Week Badminton session developed in collaboration between the Sri Lankan Youth Association and Slough Mitra Mandal as a joint activation grant. It aims to support the new Sri Lankan community to join up with other community groups. Separate group sessions for males and females are being run to bring groups together through Badminton.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped

Breaking Boundaries has supported the project through provision of a £1,200 Activation Grant to support 20 weeks of face-to-face delivery. It has focused on developing partnership working between the two community groups, Sri Lankan Muslim Association and Slough Mitra Mandal, a Sri-Lankan group, and an Indian group respectively, who have been noted as living parallel lives in the Baylis and Stoke wards.

The activities focus on:

- Improving social connectedness through a session features an activity that both groups share an interest in, Badminton, and Cricket for their children. It will also focus on putting the groups in shared space, doing the same activity and speaking with one another therefore setting the foundations for improved attitudes to diversity and cohesion.

To date, the activity has put the two groups together who now are aware of each other's presence in the area and will encourage and facilitate them in collaborative efforts in increasing community participations and increasing community voice.

What's Happened – Impacts on Cohesion

The ongoing project work demonstrates outcomes against social cohesion in these areas:

- **Social Connectedness** – The activity has newly brought together two groups who have then begun to understand each of better and therefore understand each other's place better within the local community and be engaged with others through facilitated social mixing

"It's been very good, meeting people who live in the same community as me, it's a very mixed group now…so it's doing exactly what it intended to do." **(Female participant, Indian)**	*"It's an amazing programme, I'm involved with my son, it's free and it brings people together, if there were more places doing it that would be great."* **(Male participant, Indian)**

- **Increased community involvement –** Breaking Boundaries has also encouraged them to have a wider focus in their sports activities around other issues that might be affecting participant's lives, particularly those of the Sir Lankan community which is relatively new in the area.

Through this collaborative activity development, a wider number of community groups are involved in activities in their local community.

The Future

It is planned that the sessions will continue but the Coordinator needs to have a conversation with the participants around how this would be funded and that discussions need to be had about charging participants to take part, whilst also discussing with the leaders in the community organisations involved how this might best happen.

Top Tips

- It's not about recreating the wheel, it's about mapping what is there in the community and really to engage the groups, and the best way to do this is to be out in the community with them.
- It's also key through talking to people in their community to identify organisational contacts to take forward delivery and using that organisation's expertise to help make community links. City teams should actively seek to work through other organisations to reach targeted communities.

- Identifying opportunities for next steps is also important to the group has some sense that the activity is leading something more sustained. Identifying a further activity of event can rally a group around continuing the activity and provides valuable co-design opportunities.