



 **UK
COACHING**



Pilot Health Coach Development Programme Evaluation Report

Introduction

In 2019 UK Coaching, supported by Sport England, developed a Pilot Health Coach Development Programme. The objectives of this pilot were to understand the needs of both participants with long term health conditions (LTHC), and coaches* currently coaching or wanting to coach people with long term health conditions. This report will highlight the findings of this pilot and the lessons learned.

Framework for delivery

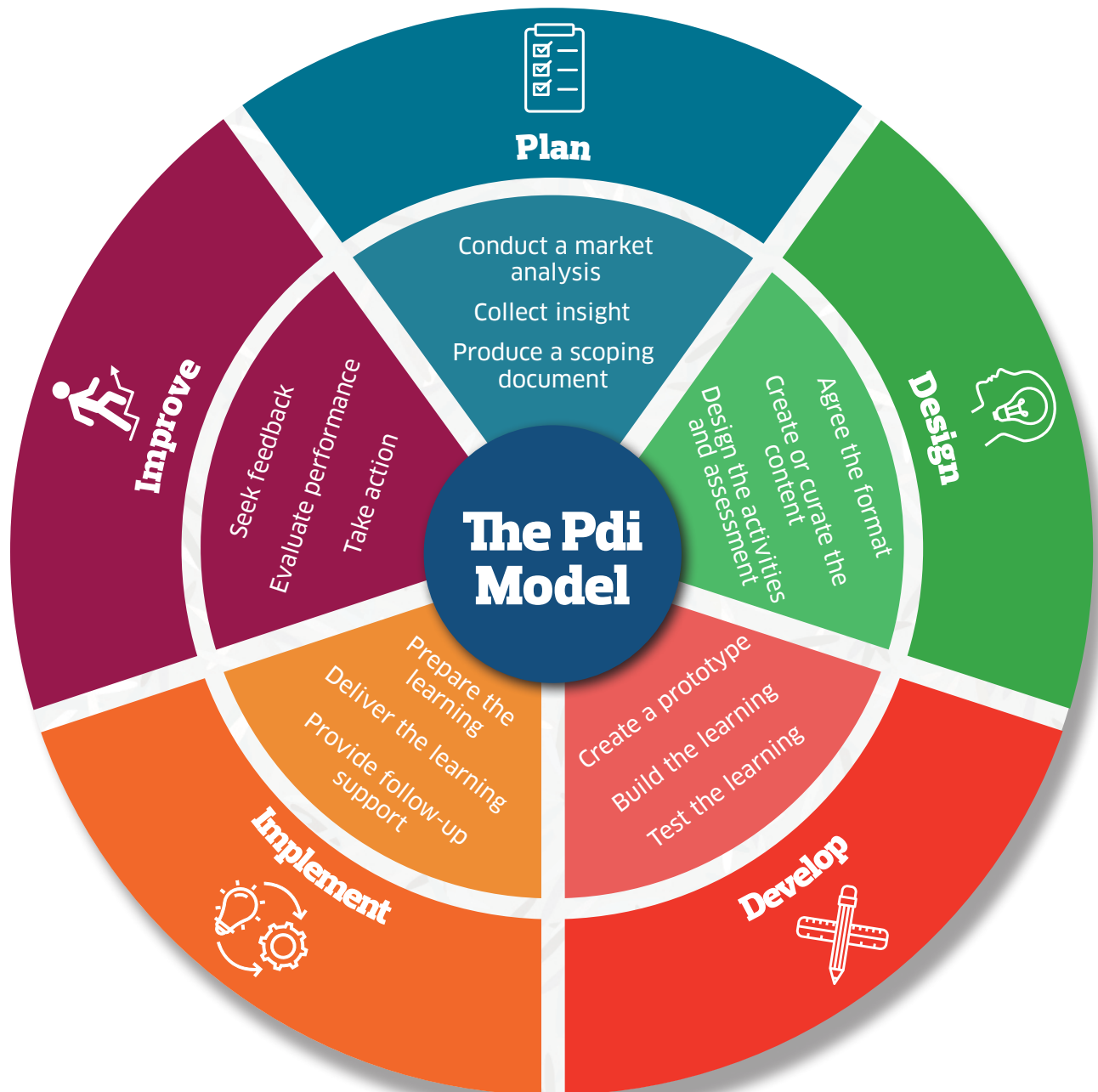
UK Coaching has developed a Learning Excellence toolkit. This toolkit provided a framework to help build a deep understanding of the learning experience design process. It includes different models of learning, resources and facilitation techniques, that we used to help deliver the best possible experience for all learners, enabling them to reach their full potential. This is referred to as the PDI model and can be found here:

This report is sectioned to reflect the PDI process that followed: Plan, Design, Develop, Implement and Improve.



PDI model

This report will take you through the PDI model in order, however if you want to look at individual sections please click on the section below. Clicking the logo, top right will bring you back to this page.

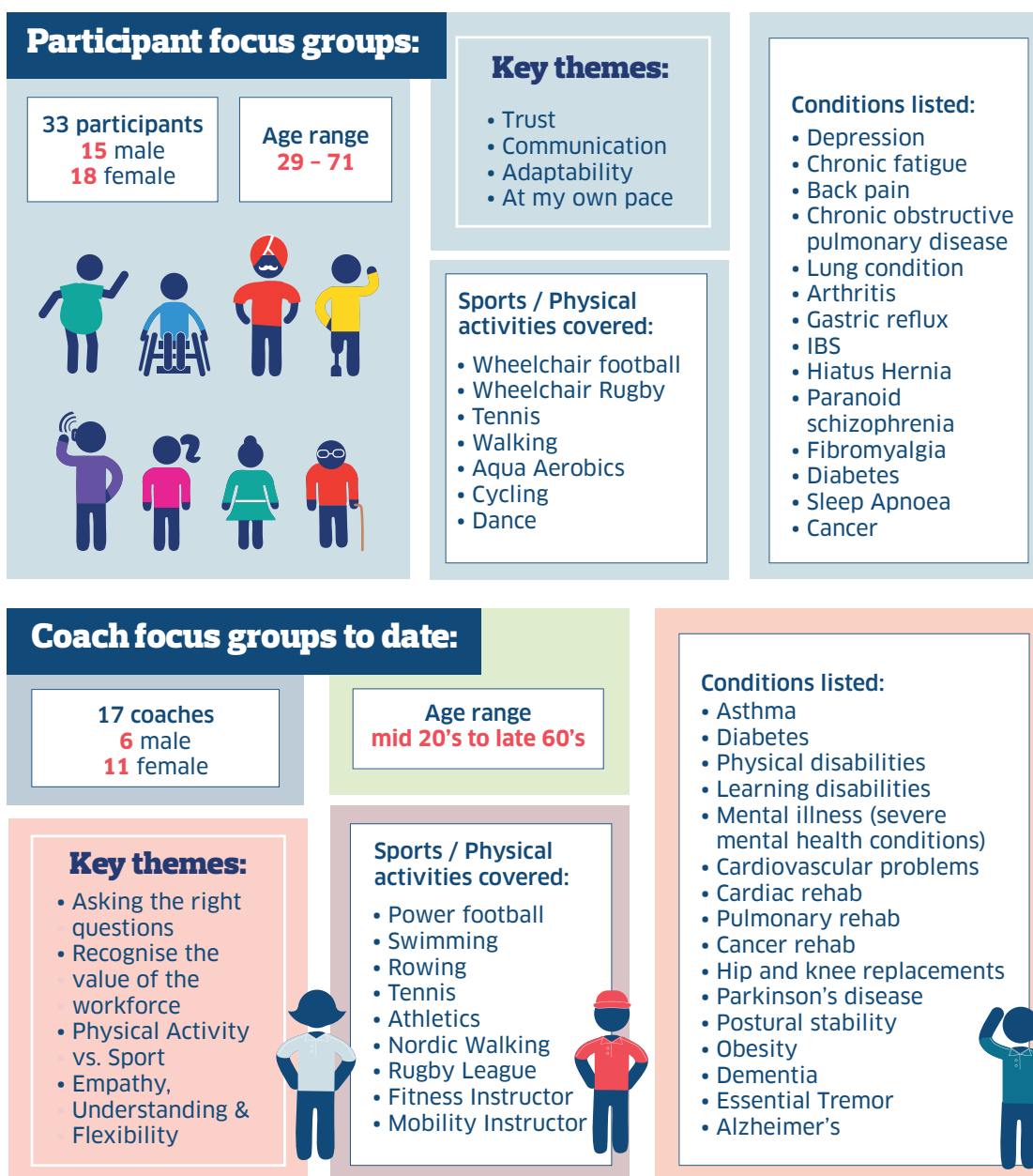




Plan

During this part of the process, we conducted a market analysis of other provision that coaches could access. We found that a lot of the learning content developed for coaches working with participants with LTHC was very condition specific, medically focussed, intensive and expensive. UK Coaching believes that great coaching is about people skills, through this pilot we wanted to test an approach to coaching often termed as “Coaching the person in front of you,” therefore with the emphasis on building relationships and learning together.

To better understand the needs of the coaches and the participants we held 12 focus groups. This enabled us to hear first hand from coaches and participants their needs to ensure that the learning programme could provide a meaningful learning experience. The make up of these focus groups are outlined below:

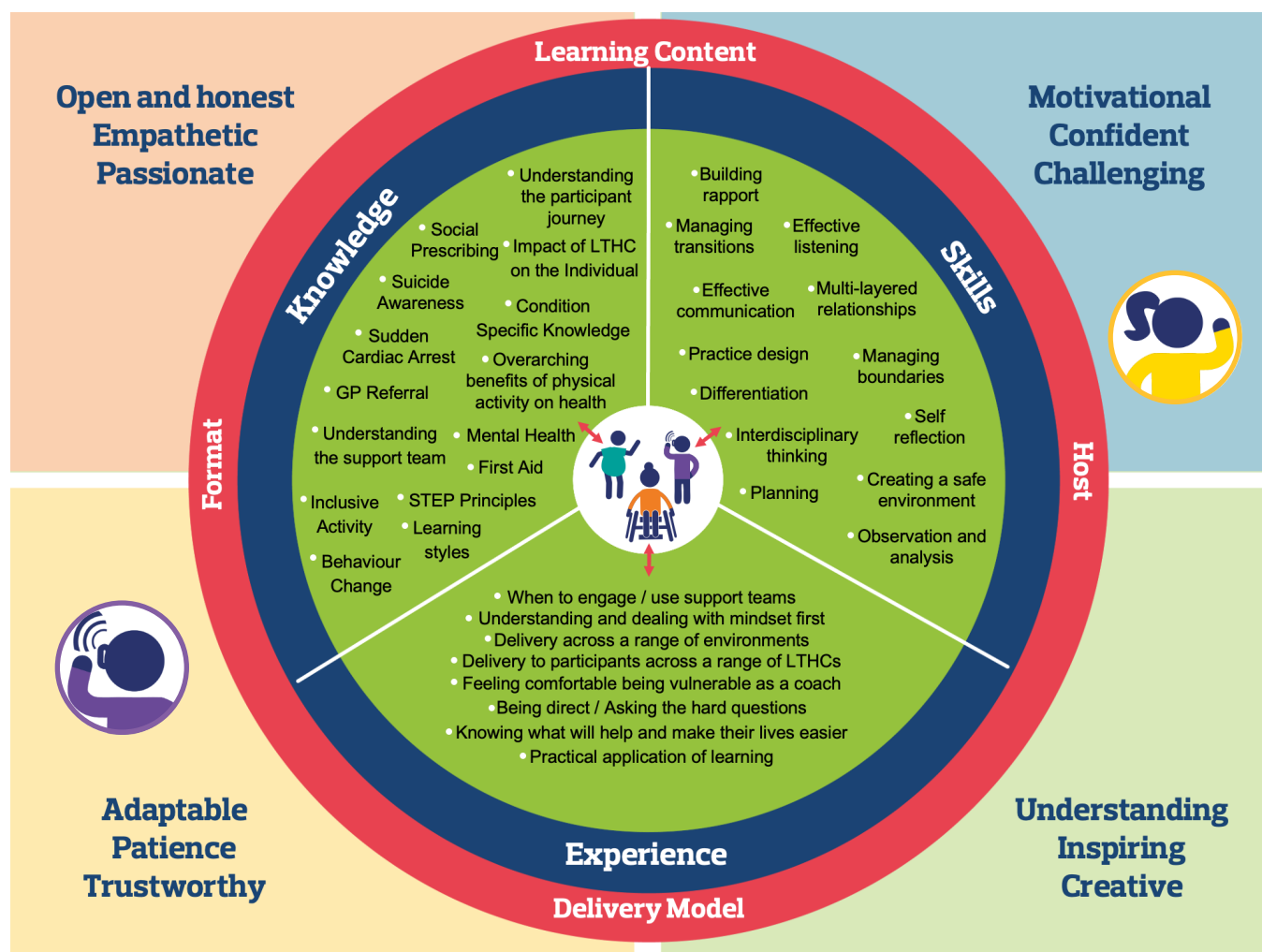


The questions asked followed the behaviour change model COM -B, to better understand the capability, opportunity and motivation to get active and help people stay active.

The findings from the focus group allowed us to plan a bespoke learning programme for coaches. Four main themes came forward from the participants. Participants were looking for coaches who were:

- **Open and honest, empathetic and passionate**
- **Motivational, confident and challenging**
- **Adaptable, patience and trustworthy**
- **Understanding, inspiring and creative**

Further detail underpinning the knowledge, skills and experience can be found here:



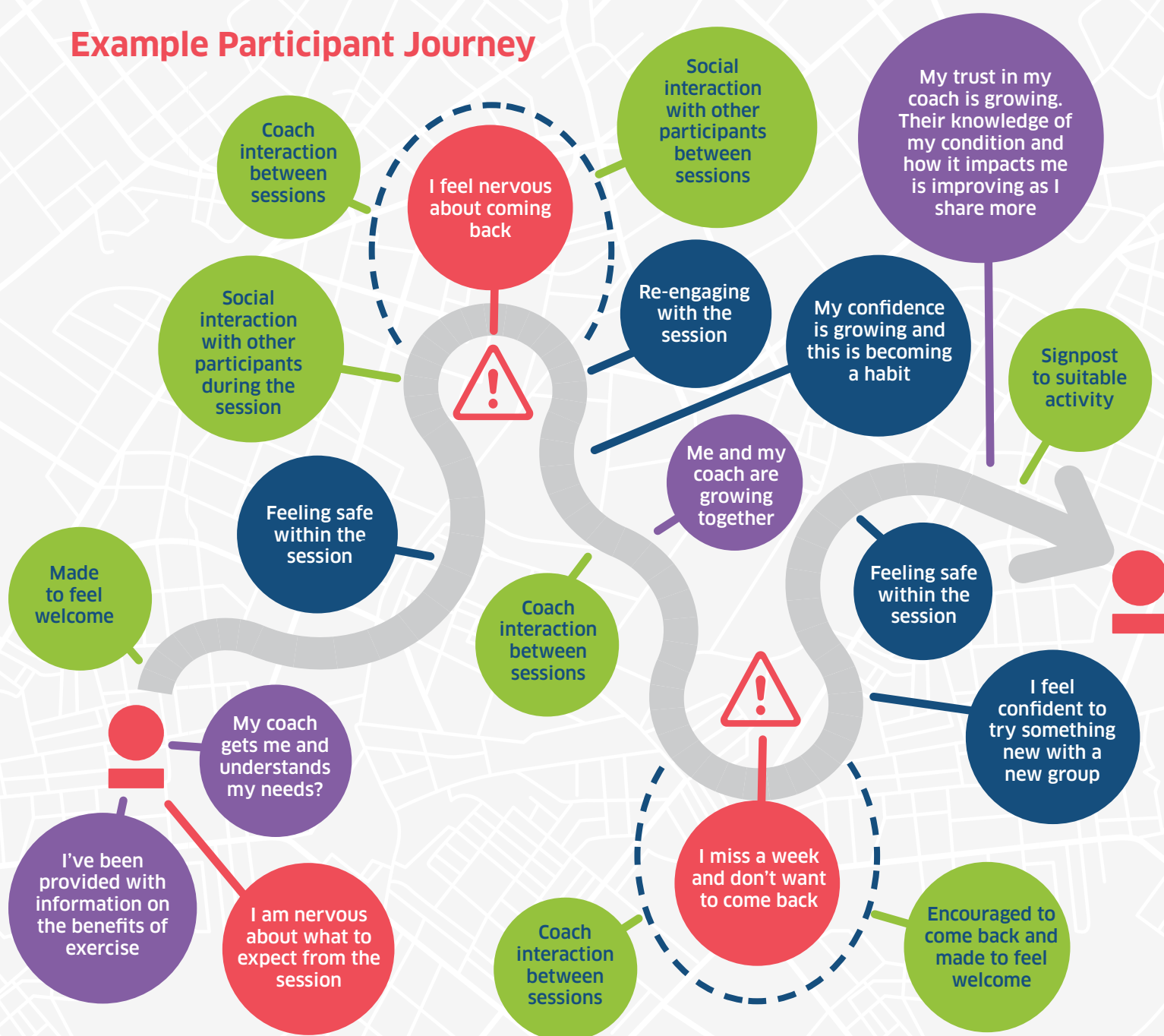
The coaches found the focus groups encouraging, they began to understand that what they were currently doing was fundamentally great coaching practice. The coaches did come forward with some additional requests for support, including managing risk, but also a support network that they could tap into as they often felt isolated in their role. This feedback allowed us to develop the following programme that formed the pilot.



Develop

It was also clear from the coach focus group that they had not fully considered the participant's individual journey. We wanted to demonstrate that every participant's journey is different. There is a need to understand the principles behind providing a participant journey that engages them; makes them feel safe; keeps them motivated; provides touch points when things get rocky; helps them form habit for physical activity; and gives them the confidence to be autonomous in moving forward. Once the coaches understood the process for this with each of their participants they can then be clear about the interventions that need to take place at each stage of the journey, which skills/ behaviours need to come into play, and also where the knowledge and experience gaps are. From this starting point we put in place a needs led support package for the coach so they could continue on their journey, knowing it would look different for every coach and every participant.

Example Participant Journey



Based on a better understanding of a participant journey, in parallel, we developed a learner journey for the coaches on the pilot.

This was a combination of the following components:

- Welcome and introduction the programme
- Evaluation of their starting, mid and end point
- Facilitated Communities of Practice (CoP)
- Workshop series
- Reflective practice sessions
- Coach Developer support (CD)
- Consensus of Risk support

Health Coach Learner Journey



We began to recruit coaches by asking organisations to nominate people who they thought could benefit from this programme. We then began to recruit Coach Developers (CDs) from these organisations also to support coaches on a one-to-one basis at touch points throughout their journey. To help provide enough Coach Developers on the programme we also recruited from a pool of UK Coaching Associate Coach Developers with a proven track record. We provided training for the Coach Developers to help them support coaches, and we recruited a tutor for the face-to-face workshops who had experience of working with people with LTHCs and physically inactive people.



Implement

Over a 16-week period the 3 cohorts of coaches went through the learner journey, one from the English Football League Trust's nominations and two from a wider pool of nominees. From 27 nominating organisations 55 coaches and 19 coach developers were developed through this pilot. To be as flexible as possible, coaches were given options as to the times and days their training would take place, allowing them to attend around their other commitments. Once coaches enrolled on the programme they were matched with their Coach Developers. Where possible, they were from their own organisations as detailed above.





Improve

We built in evaluation touch points throughout the pilot to ensure that we could both track the progress of the coaches and coach developers but also learn from this pilot to improve future delivery. Our evaluation process is outlined below:

- 3 points of formal evaluation for coaches (pre/start, mid, end)
- 1 point of formal evaluation of the Coach Developers (end)
- Collection of ad hoc feedback (email, workshop evaluation)
- UK Coaching attendance at Communities of Practice and workshops
- Discussions with Facilitators (Tutor and Coach Developers)
- Lessons learned log

We asked the coaches many questions about their motivations, expectations, experience and their levels of confidence and competence throughout the pilot.

Why did you apply for this programme?



To Improve knowledge and delivery high quality sessions for participants with health conditions. To understand better the barriers and motivations for participants"



I was offered the programme via my employer as it will be useful to increase my knowledge and confidence in working with participants with long term health conditions."



To learn how to improve my practice to provide a better experience for my clients. To meet other coaches who do similar work and learn from them."



To be a better coach to empower the participants to feel in control of their exercise journey through life"

“ To improve my performance and delivery as a health coach”

“ To Improve knowledge and delivery high quality sessions for participants with health conditions. To understand better the barriers and motivations for participants.”

“ To learn more about support processes and new methodology that helps those that we are there for.”

“ The develop my knowledge and confidence with in my coaching.”



What are you most excited about being on this programme?



**More confidence -
I don't really class
myself as a coach
with my role."**



**Sharing ideas, knowledge and
experience with other coaches.
Learning new skills that I can
apply in my coaching that will
add value"**



**I love working with different
people and learning about their
stories so thus programme has
given me more access to that."**



**Learning how to do
reflective practice
properly! (Not in
a car on the way
home!)"**



**Mentoring and
learning from
the experience of
others."**



**Becoming a
role model to
help others."**



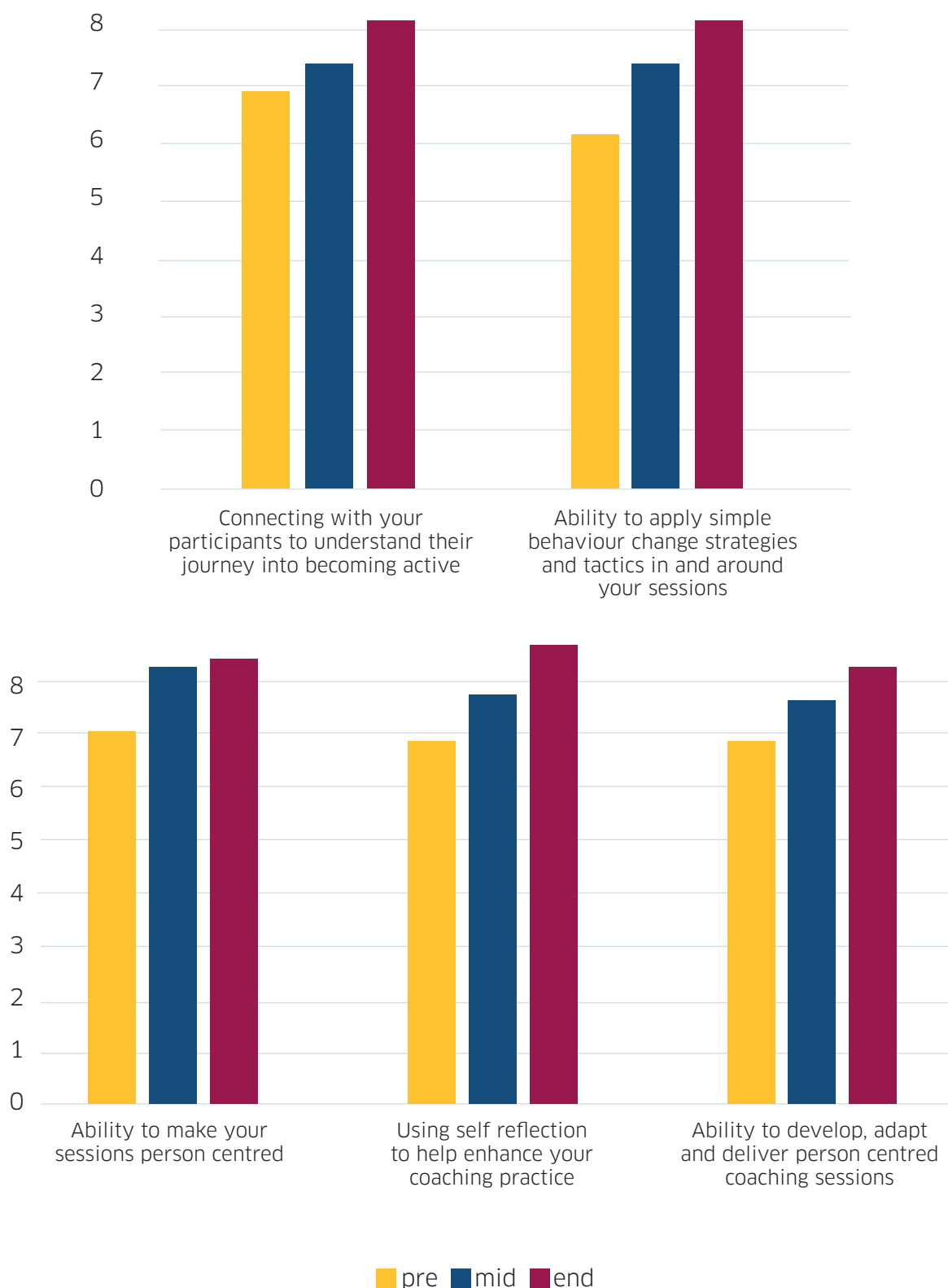
**Hearing other coaches
experiences and getting tips for
my sessions. I have only just
begun my coaching journey last
year so this is all very new!"**

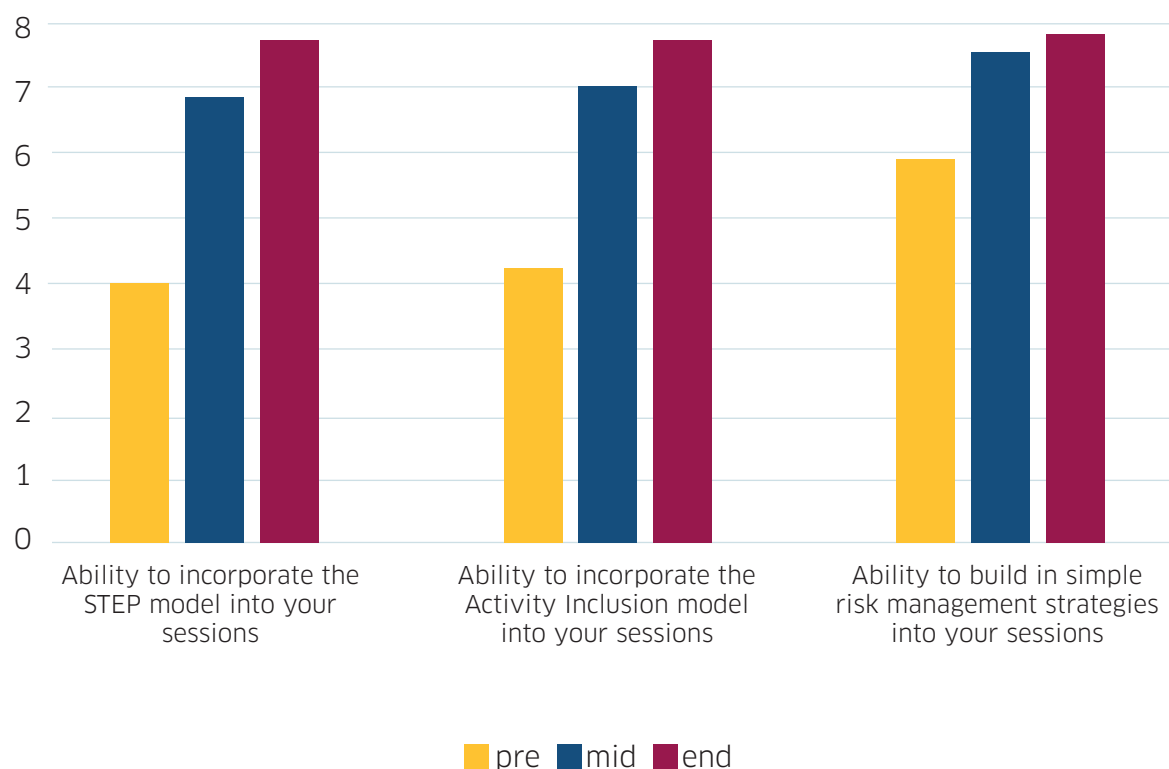


**Enhancing my wider
coaching skills and
risk management."**

We asked the coaches about their confidence and competence levels at 3 touch points during the pilot. We split the confidence and competence questions over a number of skills and knowledge, including connection, behaviour change tactics, risk management, self-reflection, and adaptation of sessions. From the following three charts we can see that confidence and competence has, on average, grown over the 16-week period.

Confidence and Competence



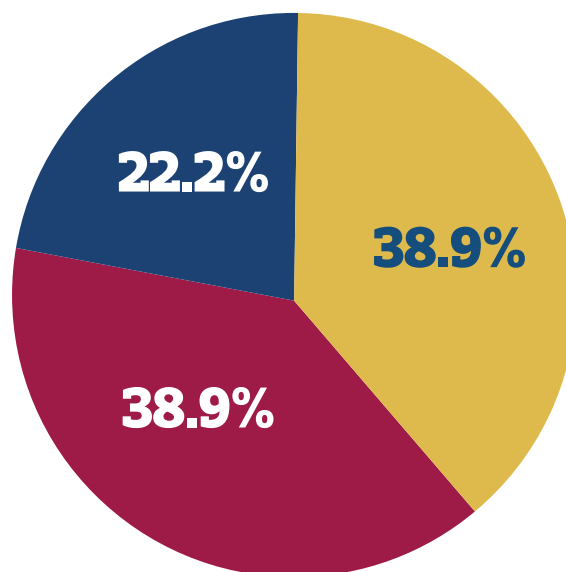


As mentioned earlier, the coach focus groups indicated that coaches wanted better connection with other coaches, our pilot offered the coaches two opportunities to do this. Firstly, through three Communities of Practice (CoP) and secondly, as part of their sessions with their Coach Developers. As you can see from the next two charts they were both valued by the coaches who completed the evaluation process.



How useful did you find the Communities of Practice?

78% of coaches found the COP's very helpful or helpful



very helpful helpful neutral

When asked what was the most valuable part of the programme? CoP

“Interaction with other coaches and learning from one another, having different view points, approaches, experiences and reflections”

“Everyone getting together and share their ideas and experience”

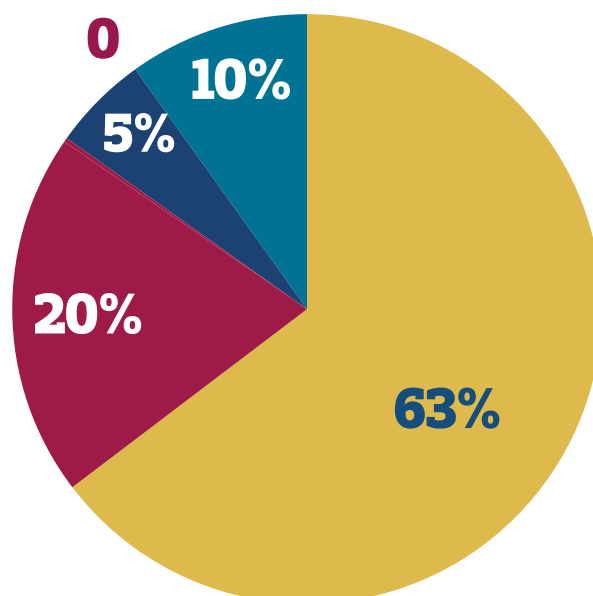
“speaking to other like minded coaches”

“Having chance to discuss in small groups each other's practise and take tips from others”

“Learning from the other coaches and shared experience”

How useful did you find the Coach Developers?

83% of coaches found the Coach Developers very helpful or helpful



very helpful helpful neutral not helpful not very helpful



When asked what was the most valuable part of the programme? Coach Developer

“The one to one sessions with coach developer were immeasurable.”

“My coach developer has been outstanding. I also valued the Consensus on Risk module”

“Having a coach mentor.”

“peer to peer, one to one mentoring, and update on modern terminology and practises”

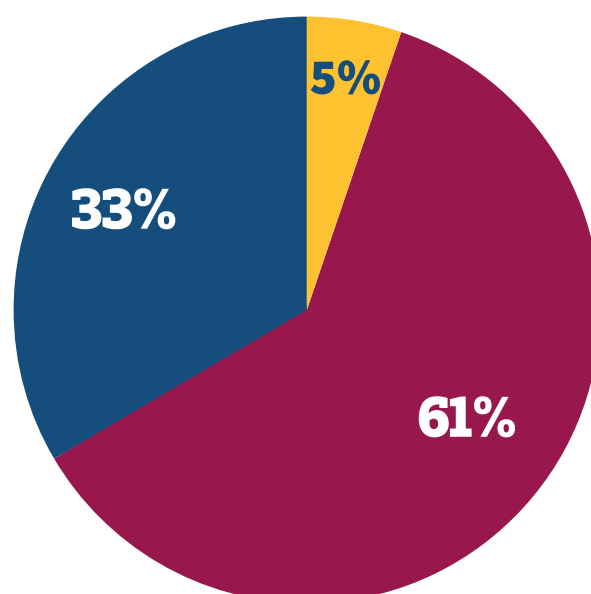
“Having your own mentor to assist you.”

Through the Coach Developer evaluation question, it became apparent that some coaches did not know how to get the best out of this relationship. This can be seen through the 15% scoring neutral to not very helpful.

This original pilot was spaced over a 16-week period. When we asked the coaches about the length of the programme, just over 60% of coaches said it was about the right length. We collected mainly positive feedback but also some constructive.

How have you found the time commitment to this programme?

61% of coaches found the time commitment about the right length



■ too short ■ about the right length ■ too long

How have you found the time commitment to this programme? Positive

“ I like the fact that it was spaced out over a number of weeks because it felt like a manageable commitment in amongst work.”

“ I had chance to reflect, utilise what I was learning”

“ The material covered and the interaction was well balanced”

“ We were given the dates so you can plan it into the work diary. Also, its better when the lectures are on different days of the week, so we don't need to cancel the same clients if they have a regular training session”

How have you found the time commitment to this programme? Constructive

“ I feel like although I enjoyed the online sessions there was many than could have been done in one day rather than spread over 3 weeks”

“ there were enough sessions to commit too, would have been better if there wasn't too much of a gap between each session”

“ When given the dates and times I was on shift for each one so able to attend, however once shift changes & holidays came into play at a later date, I found my self struggling to log into the sessions or having a session bang in the middle of a day off.”

Towards the end of the pilot, we asked the coaches about any gaps in their knowledge we could support them better with, also how they would like to receive this information if made available.

What specific gaps in your knowledge or skills would you have liked this programme to address?



I'd like to go over more risk management strategies"



Perhaps some further information on common and specific long-term conditions although I appreciate that would probably be too large a topic for the scope of this course"



creating coaching programmes



Dealing with groups with a wide range of different physical and mental LTHC"

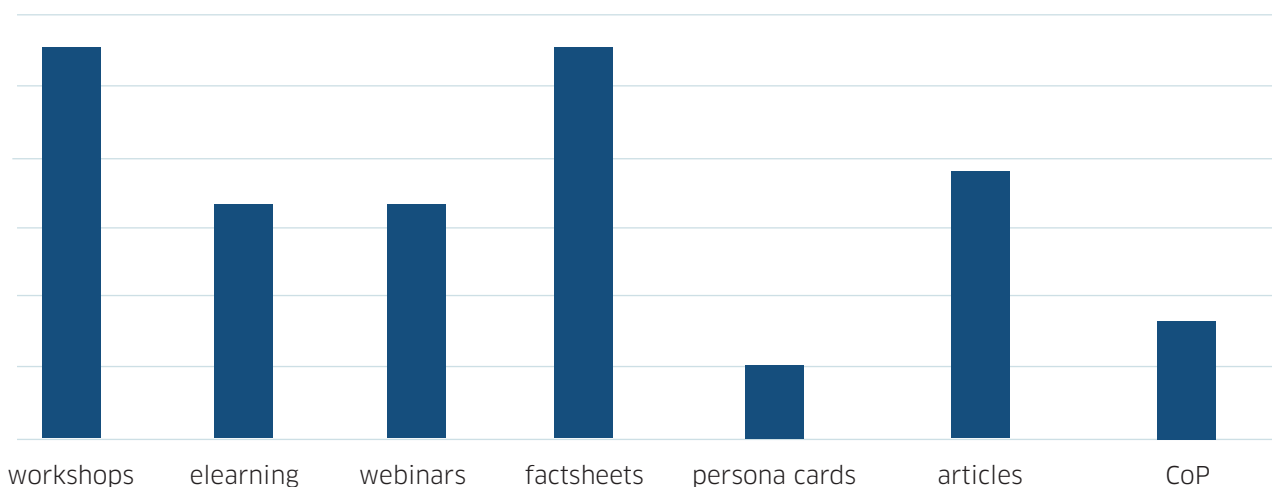


Knowing more about certain conditions"

It was evident from the feedback that the discussions on risk management and the risk consensus statements were truly valued. Coaches also requested some more information about condition specific information. From the chart below workshops and factsheet appear to be the preferred way of receiving this information.



How would you like to receive the information identified?



We also asked the learners how this programme could be improved in the future, their themed responses included:

- See dates before committing to sign up
- More face-to-face workshops
- More hard copies of information post workshops
- Flexible approach to Communities of Practice e.g., WhatsApp groups
- Better understanding of the Coach Developer role



Coach Developer Evaluation

19 coach developers were recruited onto the programme either via the nomination organisation or associate coach developers trusted by UK Coaching. A supporting “influential other,” came through very strongly in the coach focus group, we had seen the benefit of the coach developer coach relationship in other parts of the coaching pathway, so we wanted to test this within the pilot. We wanted to understand the experience of the coach developers as well as the coaches, so we also conducted an evaluation process for them.

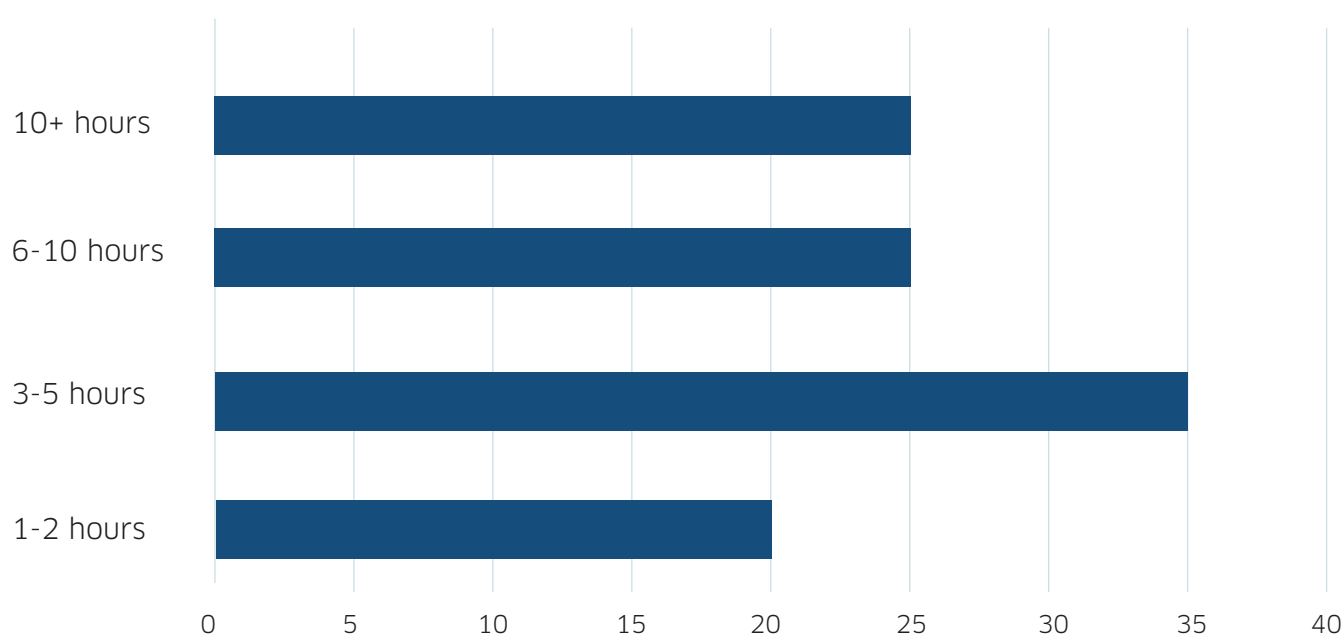
When asked why did you apply for this programme, the majority of responses fell into the following themes:

- Help other coaches
- Develop my own mentoring skills
- To work outside of the traditional sports environment

One hundred percent of the coach developers were able to make contact with their allocated coaches. 40% were able to meet face to face and the remaining 60% online.

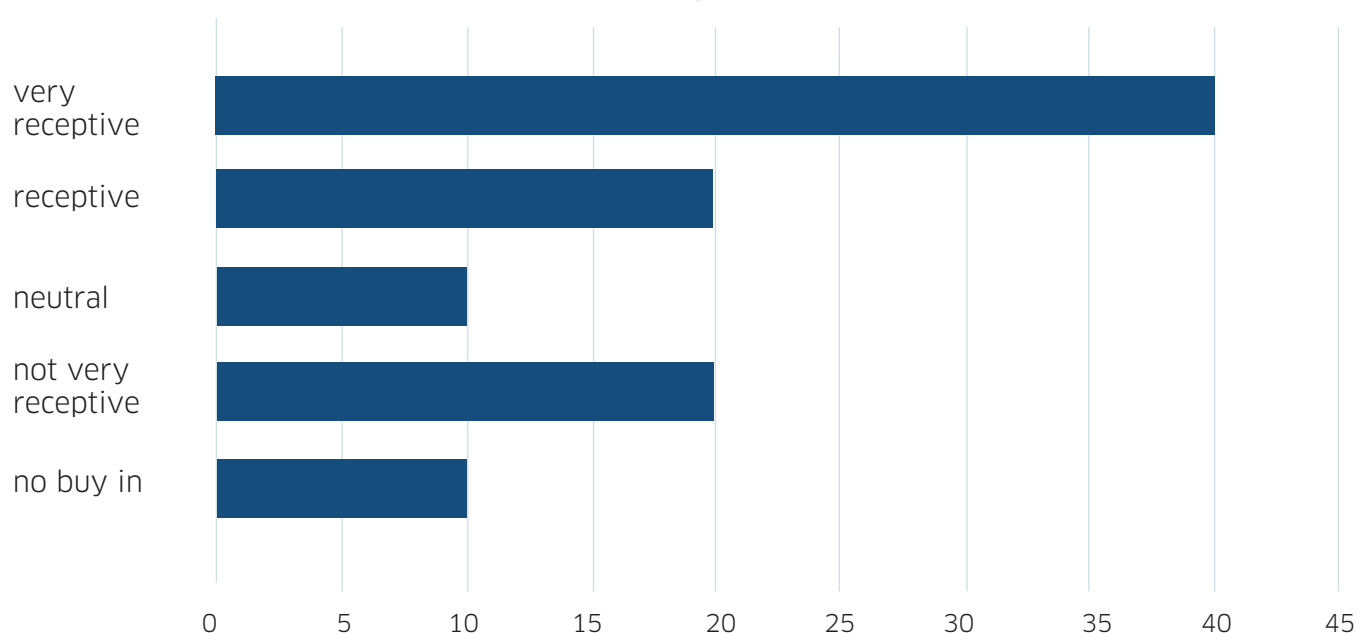
It is also clear that once contact had been made a lot of time was spent with their coaches.

How many hours have you spent supporting your coach(es) so far?



In terms of receptiveness by the coaches to the support given by the coach developers, the majority responded in a positive manner. However approximately 24% did not appear receptive to this support.

How receptive was the coach to your offer of support?



It is disappointing to see an indication of no buy in, however when asked for the reason for this, answers included: never a convenient time, or, not sure of the benefit.

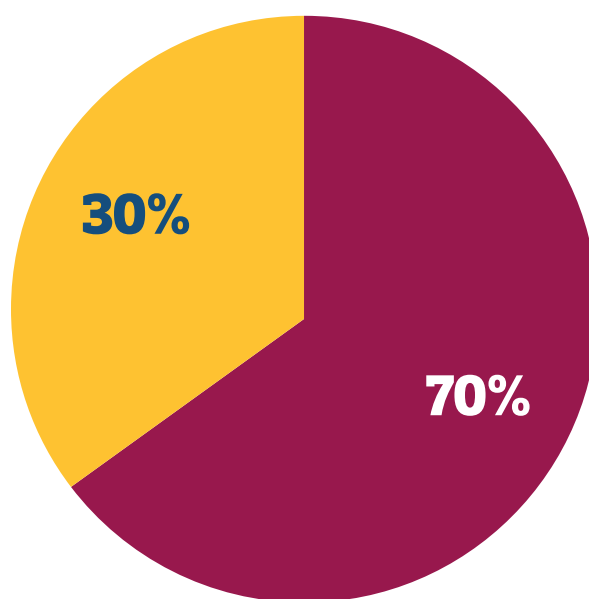
We also asked the coach developers what had been the focus in their sessions with their coach(es)? There were a variety of themes including:

- Personal development
- Professional development
- Self-reflection
- Sense making of the workshops
- Sense making of the content delivered
- Session planning
- Relationship building

When asked if the coach developers thought they had made an impact on their coaches, 70% replied yes citing examples of personal feedback, emails and repeat engagement. The 30% who stated no suggested that they had had no meaningful contact with their coach or there was little engagement.



Did you think you had made an impact on your coaches development?



■ Yes ■ No

We then asked the coach developers how UK Coaching could improve the experience for them, only one thing to improve came through, to hear some of the feedback from their coaches more often.

Coach Developer strand initial feedback

“Being able to reflect on how I currently interact with coaches was useful and really got me thinking about whether I jump in too quickly to try and ‘fix’ things - something now that I really will keep in the front of my mind.” - Emerging Coach Developer

“I’ve also taken a lot of confidence from the similarities between what I would have naturally done and what you were intending my role to be.” - Emerging Coach Developer

“What was pleasing was that the skillsets they were bringing to this Coach Developer role from very different backgrounds were hugely relevant and complimentary.” - Andy Bradshaw UK Coaching Senior Coach Developer

Overall Pilot Lessons learned

From the outset this was a test and learn project. At every step of the PDI framework a review was conducted. Many lessons were learned throughout this process, these lessons will form part of the improvement process for the design of future programmes. These included:

- Run one cohort at a time rather than 3 concurrently
- Clearer outline of the nominating organisations responsibilities
- Support nominating organisations to plan post learner journey for their coaches to be welcomed back into the organisation
- Give longer lead in times to the programme
- More emphasis on the health sector and cultural environment
- Coach Developers and coaches to submit a profile for a better understanding of each other before the first session
- Support the Coach Developers better throughout the programme
- Coach Developers to be introduced to the coaches at the start of the journey
- Guidance for coaches on how to use and what to expect from a Coach Developer – what is in scope
- In addition to the Communities of Practice encourage coach buddy systems throughout the learning journey



Overall findings

The table below outlines what we have learned throughout the pilot project. It is easy to see that the coaches and coach developers on the programme have truly benefited from the experience. With that in mind, there are also some further developments to be made.

The Challenge	The Offer	The Interventions	Outcomes and Impact
Coaches need more and easily accessed opportunities to increase their expertise in working with participants with LTHCS	Introductory training for new coaches starting out on their journey and wanting to work within LTHC environments	Learning content offered via F2F workshops, through online classrooms or e-learning	Increased self-awareness as a coach
			Increased confidence as a coach
Coaches need help to plug the gaps in their skills and knowledge	Intermediate training for experienced coaches wanting to work within LTHC environments	Communities of Practice delivered face to face or via whats app/ Spond etc	Increased motivation to learn/know more
			Improved awareness of where to get help for the coach and participants
Coaches need help to plug the gaps in their skills and knowledge	Advanced training for experienced coaches already working within LTHC environments	'Influential Other' - 1:1 Coach Developer support to help coaches apply and make sense of learning	Improved entry and exit routes for participants to remain active
Coaches need access to one central platform where coaches can access critical information or can be signposted to other websites		Resources - How To Guide for LTH C Coaches Condition Specific Crib Sheets Top Tips from Participants Case Studies and Best Practice	Improvement in relationships between coaches and health care professionals
Coaches need a blended offer including social learning spaces, coach development support, learning content and simple to access resources		One platform that is a 'one stop shop' for coaches working with participants with LTHC. Function to signpost to other websites	Increase in the competence of coaches, becoming more skilled to meet the needs of their participants
A better connect with the Health Care Sector is essential to ensure best use of resource			Participants receiving the support they need to become and remain active
Environment			
Coaches understand where to go and how to build critical relationships with partners across the Health Care Sector	Coaches will feel a sense of support, empowerment and achievement	Coaches will become more curious and feel as if they have permission to ask the right questions to get the knowledge they need	
PARTICIPANT IMPACT-CREATING A HABIT FOR LIFE Engaged, motivated and confident participants who feel physically and mentally safe to start, stay and succeed on their journey to health through sport and physical activity			

How we can all work together?

Across the sport and physical activity sector there is a lot of collaboration that could be beneficial to the development of coaches working with people with LTHCs, and also to change the perception of participants with LTHC to seek physical activity and sport in their local communities. We have found that the sector leadership requirements could fall into three main categories, see image below:

- Advocacy
- Influence
- Education

It is also recognised that a better connection with the health sector could accelerate this work.

Sector Leadership

Increasing the confidence of the health care professionals in the ability of the coach!
(Advocacy)

Mainstream coached does not cater for disability sport.
(Influence and Education)

Improving access/ removing the barriers to Coach Education across the board
(Education and Influence)

Education of instructors in terms of cost barriers and understanding of the needs of the participants
(Education)

A change of emphasis in the media away from sport and a focus more on physical activity and the wider benefits
(Influence)

Embedding the awareness of disabilities and LTHCs into the main part of qualifications rather than a bolt on
(Influence)

Recognising the critical role of grass roots coaches is inspiring lifelong engagement in activity, to support direction of future funding
(Advocacy and Influence)

Young male participants pose the biggest engagement challenge as they don't believe physical activity sessions are 'macho'
(Influence)

Reinforcing the role and value of physical activity interventions by sports professionals
(Advocacy)

Next Steps

We do not want to jump to recommendations without consulting with our partners, therefore we will be disseminating and discussing the findings in the report to build a collective response and action plan.

Having read this report, if you would like to discuss the findings in more detail please do not hesitate to contact Heather Douglas, Head of Policy & Impact at UK Coaching
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